

ENGLISH LITERATURE

Т. Д. ВОЛОСОВА,
М. Ю. ГЕККЕР,
В. В. РОГОВ

АНГЛИЙСКАЯ ЛИТЕРАТУРА

ДЛЯ VIII КЛАССА
ШКОЛ С ПРЕПОДАВАНИЕМ РЯДА ПРЕДМЕТОВ
НА АНГЛИЙСКОМ ЯЗЫКЕ

ИЗДАНИЕ ТРЕТЬЕ, ПЕРЕРАБОТАННОЕ И ДОПОЛНЕННОЕ

Допущено Министерством просвещения РСФСР

МОСКВА «ПРОСВЕЩЕНИЕ» 1974

T. D. VOLOSOVA,
M. J. HECKER,
V. V. ROGOFF

ENGLISH LITERATURE

8th FORM
ENGLISH LANGUAGE SCHOOLS

3rd EDITION, REVISED AND SUPPLEMENTED

МОСКВА "PROSVESHCHENIYE" 1974

ПРЕДИСЛОВИЕ

Настоящее учебное пособие предназначено для изучения курса английской литературы в VIII классе школ с преподаванием ряда предметов на английском языке.

Книга знакомит учащихся с основными этапами развития английской литературы от древних времен до середины XIX века и, кроме того, способствует развитию у учащихся навыков устной речи.

Материал учебного пособия излагается в хронологической последовательности и строится на научной основе. Основоположающими для характеристики разбираемых эпох и анализа творчества авторов являются оценки классиков марксизма-ленинизма.

Учебное пособие состоит из пяти разделов: I. The Middle Ages; II. The Renaissance; III. English Literature During the Bourgeois Revolution; IV. The Enlightenment; V. The Romantic Movement. В каждом разделе даются краткие элементарные сведения об эпохе, в которую жил тот или иной писатель, и о литературных направлениях; краткая характеристика творчества писателя и анализ основных произведений, иллюстрируемый отрывками из оригинала. Хрестоматийные отрывки снабжены необходимыми комментариями. В учебном пособии не дается краткого содержания произведений, поскольку учащиеся могут познакомиться с ними либо в оригинале, либо в «Хрестоматии по английской литературе»¹, либо в переводе на русский язык.

¹ Хрестоматия по английской литературе. Для учащихся VIII—IX классов школ с преподаванием ряда предметов на английском языке. Составители А. М. Сохань и Т. Д. Антонова. М., «Просвещение», 1972.

В конце каждой главы даются задания для закрепления материала и в конце каждого раздела — контрольные вопросы более общего характера, нацеливающие на основные положения программного материала.

Для того чтобы дать учащимся ясное представление об истории развития английской литературы, в учебное пособие включены, в качестве дополнительного материала, те разделы, без которых не может быть последовательности в изложении и отсутствует «связь времен». В разделе «The Middle Ages» дополнительным материалом можно считать The Literature of the Norman Period. В разделе «The Renaissance» — Sir Thomas Wyatt and Henry Howard, Earl of Surrey; the Predecessors of Shakespeare: Sir Philip Sidney, Edmund Spenser, Christopher Marlowe; Shakespeare's Junior Contemporaries: Ben Jonson; по теме «William Shakespeare» — Shakespeare's Histories, «King Lear», «The Tempest». В разделе «The Enlightenment» — Alexander Pope, The Sentimentalists. Материал, о котором идет речь, предлагается не для изучения и воспроизведения, а только в качестве дополнительной информации. В какой бы форме ни получили учащиеся эту информацию (домашнее чтение, индивидуальные доклады, внеклассная работа), она безусловно будет способствовать повышению их культурного уровня и интереса к изучаемому предмету. Дозировка проходящего в классе дополнительного материала зависит от степени языковой подготовки учащихся.

*

Работа над разделами распределялась следующим образом. Раздел I — «The Middle Ages» был написан М. Ю. Геккер, Т. Д. Волосовой. Раздел II — «The Renaissance» — В. В. Роговым. Раздел III — «English Literature During the Bourgeois Revolution» — М. Ю. Геккер, Т. Д. Волосовой. Раздел IV — «The Enlightenment» — Т. Д. Волосовой, М. Ю. Геккер. Раздел V — «The Romantic Movement» — Т. Д. Волосовой, М. Ю. Геккер, В. В. Роговым.

Упражнения и контрольные вопросы составлены М. Ю. Геккер, Т. Д. Волосовой. Общее редактирование материала проведено В. В. Роговым.

"This is a long preamble of a tale."

CHAUCEUR

I. The Middle Ages

THE DAWN OF ENGLISH LITERATURE

The Ancient Britons and Their Language. Many hundred years ago (about the 4th century before our era) the country we now call England was known as Britain, and the people who lived there were the Britons. They belonged to the Celtic race; the language they spoke was Celtic. Their culture (that is to say, their way of thinking and their understanding of nature) was very primitive. They believed that different gods lived in the thickest and darkest parts of the woods. Some plants such as the mistletoe and the oak-tree were thought to be sacred. The Britons were governed by a class of priests called the Druids [*'dru:ɪdɪz*], who had great power over them.

Some curious customs of the Druids are still kept in Britain nowadays,¹ and some traces of the Celtic language are to be found in the English of today; we meet them for the most part in geographical names: *dun/dum* — "down", "dune" (the towns of Dunscore, Dunedin, Dumbarton); *amvuin/avon* — "river" (Stratford-on-Avon); *coill/kil* — "wood" (Kilbrook).

How the Romans Came. In the 1st century before our era Britain was conquered by the powerful State of Rome. The Romans were practical men. They were very clever at making hard roads and building bridges and fine tall houses that are admired to this day. The Romans thought a great deal of fighting and they were so strong that they usually managed to win most of the battles they fought.

The Romans were greatly interested to learn from travellers that valuable metals were to be found in Britain. Finally they decided to occupy the island; they crossed the sea in galleys under the command of Julius Caesar [*'dʒu:ljəs 'si:zəl*]. Caesar wrote an interesting account of Britain.

¹ On Christmas Day the mistletoe, which is green at this time of the year, is hung up in all houses. The mistletoe has been used lately as a symbol of peace and friendship.



But well-trained as these soldiers were, it was not so easy to conquer the Britons, and the Romans had to encamp troops all over the country. It is from these camps that some of the English cities later arose.

The Latin word "castra" — "camp" became a suffix and was later pronounced [ˈkɛstə], [ˈfɛstə] and [stə]. The names of many English towns never dropped the Latin ending, and you can find Lancaster, Manchester, Worcester [ˈwʊstə], Leicester [ˈlɛstə] and many others on the map.

Many things the Romans taught the Britons were given Latin names. They made the Britons build roads and bridges and a high wall in the north to keep the savages out. Thus the word "wall" comes from the Latin "vallum", "street" from "strata" meaning "road". But the Romans and the natives of Britain did not become one nation; all that the Romans wanted was to make the Britons work for them.

Towards the end of the 4th century the invasion of all of Europe by barbaric peoples compelled the Romans to leave Britain, because they were needed to defend their own country. The fall of the Roman Empire followed soon after.

The Invasion by Germanic Tribes. As soon as the Britons were left to themselves, they had very little peace for many years. Sea-robbers came sailing in ships from other countries, and the Britons were always busy trying to defend themselves. Among these invaders were some Germanic tribes called Angles, Saxons and Jutes [dʒu:ts] who lived in the northern and central parts of Europe. They spoke different dialects of the West Germanic language from which modern German developed. A wild and fearless race, they came in hordes from over the North Sea and, try as they would, the Britons could never drive them away. And many a battle was fought by the Britons until at last they were forced to retreat to the west of Britain: to Wales, Cornwall, and Strathclyde. Those who ventured to stay became the slaves of the invaders and were forced to adopt many of their customs and learn to speak their languages.

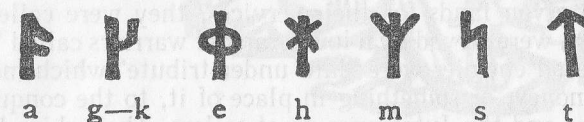
Their Pagan Gods. The Angles, Saxons and Jutes were pagans, that is to say, they believed in many gods. The gods of the Anglo-Saxons were: Tu, or Tiesco, — god of Darkness, Woden — god of War, Thor — the Thunderer, and Freia — goddess of Prosperity. When people learned to divide up time into weeks and the week into seven days, they gave the days the names of their gods. It is not hard to guess that Sunday is the day of the sun, Monday — the day of the moon, Tuesday — the day of the god Tiesco, Wednesday — Woden's day, Thursday — Thor's day, Friday — Freia's day, and Saturday — Saturn's day (Saturn was the god of Time worshipped by the ancient Romans).

The Anglo-Saxon Dialects. Britain became divided into seven kingdoms: Kent, Sussex, Essex, Wessex, Mercia [ˈmɜ:ʃjə], East Anglia, and Northumbria [nɔ:θʌmbriə] which were constantly at war with one another.

Four dialects were spoken in these seven kingdoms: 1) the Northumbrian dialect was spoken by the Angles who lived to the north of the river Humber, in the north-east of England; 2) the Mercian dialect was spoken by the Angles who lived between the river Humber and the Thames; 3) the West-Saxon dialect, or Wessex, was spoken by the Saxons who lived to the south of the Thames; 4) and the fourth, a minor dialect, Kentish, was the language of the Jutes. The language of Scotland, Ireland and Wales remained Celtic.

The Angles, Saxons and Jutes fought with one another for supreme power; they nevertheless became one nation in the course of a few centuries. The first king to rule over all of them was Egbert, king of Wessex. He was made king at the beginning of the 9th century. Most of the works and documents in Old English that are in existence today are written in the Wessex dialect of Anglo-Saxon.

Runes. By the time the Angles and Saxons conquered Britain, they already had letters of their own called "runes" which they carved on stone and wood, but they had no written literature yet, and the stories and poems they made up had to be memorized. These were brought to Britain, and runic inscriptions made in Britain are in existence.



Runes (letters carved on stone and wood, 5th century).

"BEOWULF" ¹

One of the old English words you will meet in English literature is "folk" [fouk] which means "people". Folk-dances, folk-songs and folklore are the dances, songs and tales that people made up when at work or at war, or for amusement. There were also professional singers called "bards". They composed songs about events they wanted to be remembered. They sang of wonderful battles and of the exploits

¹ [ˈbeɹəwulf]

of brave warriors. These songs were handed down to children and grandchildren and finally reached the times when certain people, who had learned to write, decided to put them down. Such people were called "scribes". The word "scribe" comes from the Latin "scribere" — "to write".

The beautiful Anglo-Saxon poem "Beowulf" may be called the foundation-stone of all British poetry. It tells of times long before the Angles and Saxons came to Britain. There is no mention of England in it. The poem was composed by an unknown author. Many parts were added later. The whole poem was written down in the 10th century by an unknown scribe. The manuscript is in the British Museum, in London. It is impossible for a non-specialist to read it in the original, so the parts from "Beowulf" printed in this book are taken from a twentieth-century translation.

The scene is set among the Geats [gi:ts], or Jutes, who lived on the southern coast of the Scandinavian peninsula at the time, and the Danes, their neighbours across the strait.

The people were divided into two classes: free peasants and warriors. The peasants tilled the soil and served the fighting-men who defended them from hostile tribes. The kings were often chosen by the people, for they had to be wise men and skilled warriors. These chieftains were often called "folk-kings".

The safety of the people depended on the warriors. There were several ranks of warriors; the folk-king, or liege-lord, was at the head of the community; he was helped by warriors who were his liegemen. If they were given lands for their services, they were called "earls". These, in turn, were served by a lower rank of warriors called "knights". Their conquered enemies were "laid under tribute" which means they had to pay money, or something in place of it, to the conqueror.

The Danes and the Jutes were great sailors. Their ships had broad painted sails and tall prows which were often made into the figure of a dragon or wolf or some other fierce animal. If the wind blew against them, the ship was moved by means of long rows of oars on either side. In these ships the warriors sailed to far-off lands.

The poem shows us these warriors in battle and at peace, it shows their feasts and amusements, their love for the sea and for adventure.

Beowulf is a young knight of the Geats. His adventures form the two parts of this heroic epic. ¹ Beowulf fights not for his own glory, but for the benefit of his people. He is ready to sacrifice his life for them. His unselfish way in protecting people makes him worthy to be folk-king.

¹ epic — poetry describing the deeds and adventures of a great hero orally transmitted from poet to poet.

King Hrothgar in Heorot.



THE STORY

Long, long ago there lived a king of the Danes named Hrothgar [ˈhrɒθɡɑː]. He had won many battles and gained great wealth.

Once he decided to build a large palace where he could feast with his kinsmen and warriors. When the gold-roofed hall was built, it was so beautiful that all the people around could not tear their eyes off it. In this marvellous hall Hrothgar presented costly gifts to his warriors and gave splendid banquets.

The palace was called Heorot (Stag-hall) because it was decorated with antlers of stags (deer).

The joy of the king, however, didn't last long. In the dark fens near by there lived a fierce sea-monster, the "grim and greedy" Gren-

del, who got madly envious of the festive noise and wanted to destroy Heorot.

Bore it bitterly he who bided in darkness
That light-hearted laughter loud in the building
Greeted him daily.

Grendel looked like a man but was much bigger, and his whole body was covered with long hair, so thick and tough that no weapon could harm him.

One night when the warriors in Heorot were fast asleep after their feast, Grendel rushed in, seized thirty men and devoured them. The next night the monster appeared again. The men defended themselves bravely, but their swords could not even hurt the monster.

From that time no one dared to come to Heorot. For twelve years the palace stood deserted.

Twelve-winters' time torture suffered
The friends of the Scyldings,¹

Soul-crushing sorrow. Not seldom in private
Sat the King in his council; conference held they.

The news of the disaster reached Beowulf, nephew of Higelac [h'igilæk], king of the Jutes.

..... So Higelac's liegeman,
Good among Geatmen,² of Grendel's achievements
Heard in his home: of heroes then living
He was stoutest and strongest, sturdiest and noble.

Beowulf was the strongest and the bravest of all the warriors. He was said to have the strength of thirty men.

..... that he thirty men's grapple
Has in his hand, the hero-in-battle.

As soon as he learned that the life of the Danes was in danger, he decided to help Hrothgar. With fourteen chosen companions he set sail for the country of the Danes.

Hrothgar had heard of Beowulf's strength and heroic deeds, so he gladly welcomed the famous warrior and gave a banquet in Heorot to honour him. Late at night, when the feast was over, all went to

¹ Scylding ['skildɪŋ] — the family name of Hrothgar.

² Geatmen ['gi:tmen] — Jutes.

sleep except one. It was Beowulf, who remained on watch waiting for the monster.

As Beowulf knew that no weapon could kill Grendel, he was ready to fight bare-handed.

Suddenly the man-eater broke into the hall. He seized and devoured one of the sleeping warriors, and then approached Beowulf. A desperate hand-to-hand fight began. It was so terrible that the very walls of the palace shook. The monster knew he had never met with such strength.

B'neath the whole of the heavens, no hand-grapple greater
In any man else had he ever encountered...

Beowulf managed to tear off Grendel's arm, and the monster retreated to his den howling and roaring with pain and fury. He was fatally wounded and soon died.

In the morning Beowulf hung the arm and shoulder in the hall, and the Danes all wondered how he could have torn it off. The hand was so large it almost filled the room.

Boundless was the joy and gratitude of Hrothgar and his warriors. The king presented Beowulf with precious gifts and gave a splendid feast in his honour. The queen honoured him with a famous necklace. The bards made up a song about Beowulf's prowess.

The next night Grendel's mother, a water-witch, came to Heorot to avenge her son's death. She was wild with woe and anger.

..... the mother of Grendel,
Devil-shaped woman, her woe ever minded,
.....
A mighty crime-worker, her kinsman avenging.

While Beowulf was asleep she snatched away one of Hrothgar's favourite warriors. The old king was broken-hearted; Beowulf tried to comfort him.

Beowulf answered: "Grieve not, oh wise one!
For each it is better his friend to avenge
Than to cry; Oh King, quick let us hasten
To look at the footprint of the mother of Grendel.
I promise thee this now: to her place she'll escape not."

Beowulf decided to fight the water-witch. In full armour, sword in hand, he plunged into the waters full of hissing serpents. He found the water-witch in her den beside the dead body of her son Grendel. A desperate fight began. At first Beowulf was nearly overcome, as his sword had no power against the monster, but fortunately his glance



Beowulf with Grendel's head.

fell upon a huge sword hanging on the wall. It was a magic weapon. Beowulf seized it and it went deep into the monster's heart. Then he cut off the heads of Grendel and of the water-witch and carried them to the surface as a proof of his victory.

The crowd loudly expressed their admiration for the victor. Hrothgar poured treasures into Beowulf's hands. Heorot was freed for ever.

At last the day came for Beowulf to sail home. Everybody regretted his departure. When Beowulf arrived in his own land, he gave all the treasures he had brought to Higelac and the people. Beowulf was admired and honoured by everybody.

After the death of Higelac, Beowulf became king of the Jutes.

For fifty years he ruled his country wisely and well until one day a great disaster befell the happy land: every night there appeared a fire-breathing dragon who came and destroyed the villages and the crops of the realm (kingdom). The dragon was the guardian of ancient treasures stored in a cave, and a passing traveller had managed to carry away a jewelled cup. The burning of the crops was the fire-dragon's revenge. Remembering his glorious youth, Beowulf decided to fight the dragon and save his people, but of all his earls only Wiglaf, a brave warrior and heir to the kingdom, had the courage to help him.

In a fierce battle the dragon was killed, but his flames burnt Beowulf, who now was dying of his wounds.

Beowulf ordered Wiglaf to take as much treasure as he could carry and give it to the Jutes. In his last hour he thought only of his people, for whose happiness he had sacrificed his life.

Before burning the body of the king, Wiglaf put the blame for his death upon the cowardly earls. Here they are called "the tardy-at-battle" ("tardy" means "late", thus: "the late-for-the battle").

The tardy-at-battle returned from the thicket, and Wiglaf says:

" Too few of protectors
Came round the King at the critical moment;
 Death is more pleasant
To every earlman than infamous life is."

The memory of Beowulf was honoured by a memorial, a high mound visible from a great distance, so that passing seamen might constantly be reminded of his prowess.

The poem is a relic of those far-off days when people believed in gods, witches and monsters. Grendel, the water-witch, and the fire-dragon personify the evil forces of nature, too strong for the people to conquer. The desire of man to do away with them and to become master of his own destiny is expressed in the poem.

Beowulf's victory over the monsters symbolizes the triumph of man over the powers of darkness, evil, and death.

The merit of the poem lies in the vivid description of the life of that period, in the heroic deeds of Beowulf and in the beauty of the language.

The Language of the Poem

Anglo-Saxon verse had no rhyme and no regular number of syllables in its lines, but it was necessary that each line should have three

stressed syllables usually beginning with the same consonant. Such a sound effect is called "alliteration".

Note the alliteration in the following lines:

- [b] Bore it bitterly he who bided in darkness
[t] Twelve-winters' time torture suffered
[s] Soul-crushing sorrow. Not seldom in private
[k] Sat the King in his council; conference held they
[h] Heard in his home: of heroes then living

Many nouns and names of people are accompanied by one or even two descriptive words. Based on a certain likeness between two subjects or two ideas, the descriptive words show the subject in a new light. Such descriptive words are called metaphors.

Here are some metaphors:

- for the sea: salt-streams, wave-deeps, sail-road;
for the ship: wave-goer, fresh-tarred craft, broad-bosomed bark;
for the warriors: the cased-in-helmets, folk-troop defenders, the famous-for-prowess, foot-going-champions (not on horseback), heroes-in-battle;
for the armour: ring-made burnie, link-woven burnies, light-flashing helmets;
for the weapons: bill-sword, brand-sword, battle-board (shield);
for a quarrel: sword-hate, hot-burning hatred;
for fighting: the hand-rush of heroes;
for the cowards: tardy-at-battle (The cowards are called "tardy-at-battle" for their late arrival, probably intentional, at the place of battle.);
for the king: ring-prince, folk-chief, folk-leader, friend-lord of folks;
for the musical instrument: joy-wood, glee-wood;
for music: harp-joy.

Exercises

1. Say a few words about the languages spoken in the British Isles after the Anglo-Saxon Conquest.
2. Tell the story of Beowulf.
3. Find other examples of alliteration in the poem:
1) with [l] on page 12; 2) with [g] on page 12; 3) with [s] on page 12; 4) with [h] on pages 12, 13; 5) with [el] on page 13; 6) with [t] on page 15; 7) with [k] on pages 13, 15.
4. Find these descriptive combinations in the extracts of the poem given in this book and explain what they mean.

- | | |
|---------------------------|-----------------------|
| 1) Light-hearted laughter | 5) Hand-grapple |
| 2) Twelve-winters' time | 6) Devil-shaped woman |
| 3) Soul-crushing sorrow | 7) Crime-worker |
| 4) Hero-in-battle | 8) Tardy-at-battle |

ANGLO-SAXON LITERATURE

(7th — 11th centuries)

The Spread of Christianity. The culture of the early Britons changed greatly under the influence of Christianity, which penetrated into the British Isles in the 3rd century. This was the time when many Christians escaped from Roman persecution to Britain and Gaul [ɡɔ:l] (France), which were colonies of Rome at that period.

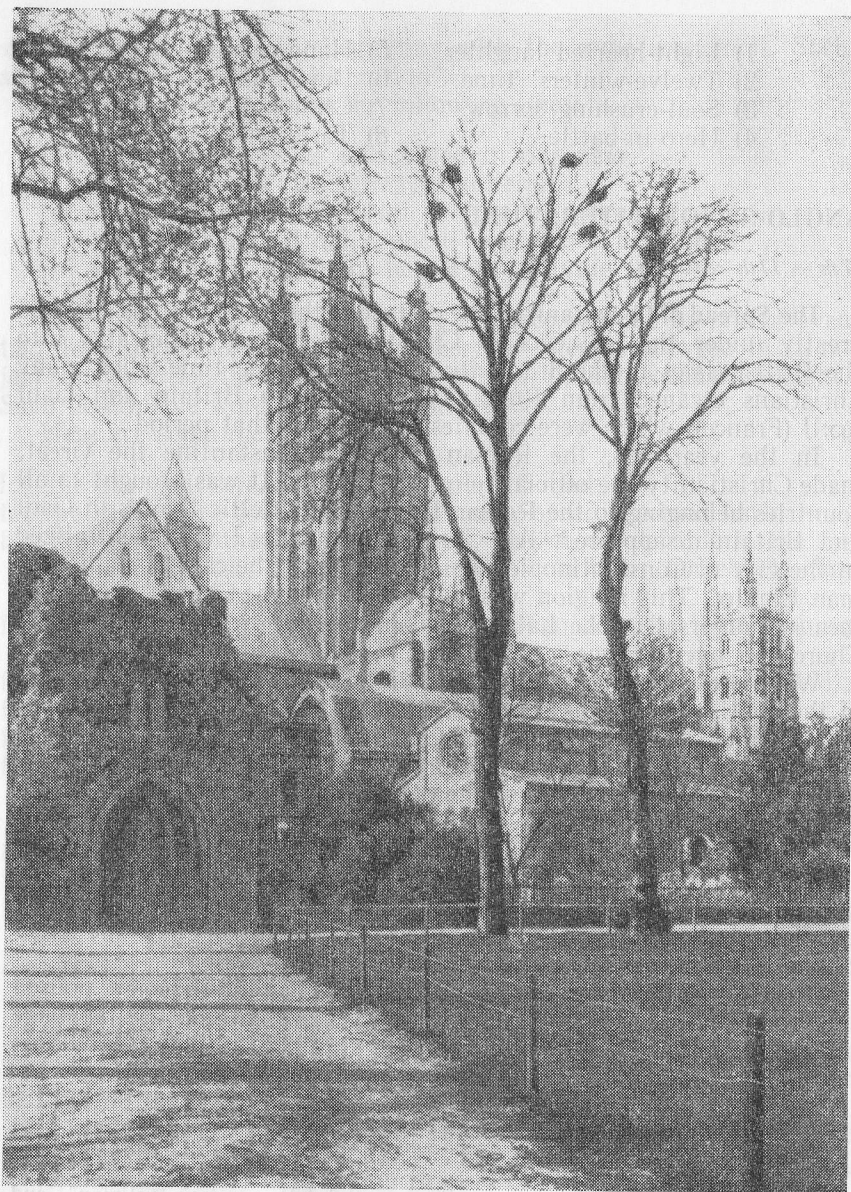
In the year 306, the Roman emperor, Constantine the Great, made Christianity the official religion of Rome. It was brought to all countries belonging to the Roman Empire. The Celtic Druids in Gaul and Britain disappeared. All Christian Churches¹ were centralized in the city of Constantinople, which was made the capital of the Roman Empire. This religion was called the Catholic Church ("catholic" means "universal"). The Latin language became the language of the Church all over Europe.

When the Saxon and other pagan tribes invaded Britain, most of the British Christians were put to death or driven away to Wales and Ireland. They told stories of Christian martyrs and saints. Such stories were typical of the literature of that time.

It was not until the end of the 6th century that monks came from Rome to Britain again. The head of the Roman Church at that time was Pope Gregory. He thought he could spread his influence over England if he converted the people to Christianity. Firm in this purpose, he sent monks to the island. They landed in Kent and built the first church in the town of Canterbury. Up to this day the Archbishop of Canterbury is the head of the English Church.

The Centres of Learning. Now that Roman civilization poured into the country again, Latin words once more entered the language of the Anglo-Saxons, because the religious books that the Roman monks had brought to England were all written in Latin. The monasteries, where reading and writing were practised, became the centres of learning and education in the country. No wonder poets and

¹ The word "church" when written with a capital letter, means "religion", and when written with a small letter, means "the place of worship". Here "Christian Churches" means "the Christian religion of different European countries".



Canterbury Cathedral.

writers imitated those Latin books about the early Christians, and also made up stories of their own about saints.

Caedmon and Cynewulf. The names of only two of those early poets have reached our days: Caedmon ['kædmən] and Cynewulf ['kniwulf].

Caedmon lived in the 7th century. He was a shepherd at Whitby ['wɪtbi], a famous abbey in Yorkshire. He composed in his native language, that is in the Northumbrian dialect of Anglo-Saxon. He was no longer young when the gift of song came to him. The monks took him to the abbey and he spent the rest of his life in making up religious poetry. He composed hymns and a poem, the "Paraphrase". It retells fragments from the Bible in alliterative verse. Many other monks took part in this work, but their names are unknown to us.

Cynewulf was a monk who lived at the end of the 8th century. His name was not forgotten, as he signed his name in runes in the last line of his works. Two of his poems, "Elene [i:'li:n]" and "Juliana ['dʒu:lɪ'ænəl]", are notable because they are the first Anglo-Saxon works to introduce women characters.

Along with religious poetry, folk-tales about worldly affairs were written down at the monasteries and put into verse by poets. These were wedding-songs, songs to be sung at feasts, war-songs, death-songs, and also ploughing-songs, and even riddles. In the 11th century these were prohibited by the Church.

The Venerable Bede (673—735). The greatest writer of the time was the Venerable Bede [bi:d]. He was brought up in the monasteries of Northumbria where he received the best education of the time. He wrote mostly in Latin. His books on natural history and astronomy were a collection of all the learning known in the Middle Ages. His famous book, "The History of the English Church", was well known in France and Italy. His works are still valued today: they show what the country was like thirteen hundred years ago and how men acted and thought at that time.



The Venerable Bede writing the life of St. Cuthbert, the monk who spread Christianity in the north of Britain.



A Saxon thane (or chief) and his wife.

Alfred the Great (849—901). The beginning of the 9th century was a troubled time for England. Danish pirates, called Norsemen, kept coming from overseas for plunder. Each year their number increased.

When Alfred, the grandson of Egbert, was made king in the year 871, England's danger was the greatest. Nevertheless, in a great battle fought by Alfred at Maldon in 891, the Norsemen were defeated, and Alfred decided to make peace with them. The greater portion of England was given up to the newcomers. The only part of the kingdom left in possession of Alfred was Wessex.

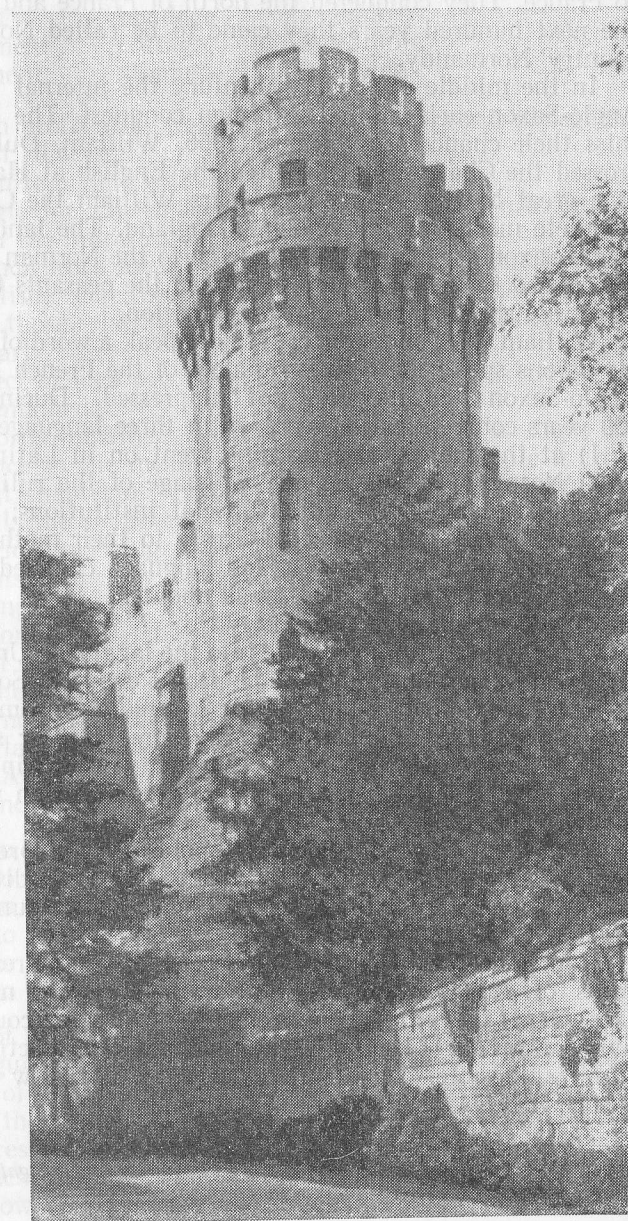
Alfred was a Latin scholar; he had travelled on the continent and visited France. He is famous not only for having built the first navy, but for trying to enlighten his people. He drew up a code of laws. He translated the Church history of Bede from Latin into Anglo-Saxon, the native language of his people, and a portion of the Bible as well. To him the English owe the famous "Anglo-Saxon Chronicle" which may be called the first history of England, the first prose in English literature. It was continued for 250 years after the death of Alfred.

The literature of the early Middle Ages and the Church taught that man was an evil being and his life on earth was a sinful life. As man was subordinated to God, he had to prepare himself for the after-life by subduing his passions and disregarding all earthly cares.

THE LITERATURE OF THE NORMAN PERIOD

(12th — 13th centuries)

The Norman Conquest. When King Alfred died, fighting with the Danes soon began again. Parties of the Norsemen sailed round Scotland and over to Ireland. Others sailed south across the Channel



Warwick Castle, built by William the Conqueror in the 11th century.

to France. They conquered the north of France and settled there. In the next hundred years they came to be called Normans, and their country Normandy.

In the middle of the 11th century the internal feuds among the Anglo-Saxon earls invited a foreign conquest. The Normans did not miss their chance. In the year 1066, William, Duke of Normandy, crossed the Channel and defeated the English at Hastings [heistɪŋz] in a great battle. Within five years William the Conqueror became complete master of the whole of England. The lands of most of the Anglo-Saxon aristocracy¹ were given to the Norman barons, and they introduced their feudal laws to compel the peasants to work for them. The English became an oppressed nation.

William the Conqueror could not speak a word of English. He and his barons spoke the Norman dialect of the French language; but the Anglo-Saxon dialects were not suppressed. During the following 200 years communication went on in three languages:

- 1) at the monasteries learning went on in Latin;
- 2) Norman-French was the language of the ruling class and was spoken at court and in official institutions;
- 3) the common people held firmly to their mother tongue.

In spite of this, however, the language changed so much in the course of time that we must speak about it.

How the Language Changed.

1) Many French words came into the language. Under the influence of French the pronunciation of the people changed. Some French words could not be pronounced by the Anglo-Saxons, so some of the Norman-French sounds were substituted by more familiar sounds from Old English. There appeared many new long vowels (diphthongs) in their native language. This newly formed pronunciation was nearing that of Modern English.

2) The spelling did not correspond to the pronunciation. The Norman scribes brought to England their Latin traditions. The Anglo-Saxon letters þ, ð for the sounds [θ] and [ð] were runes. The Normans replaced these letters by the Latin t + h = th.

3) What was particularly new was the use of French suffixes with words of Anglo-Saxon origin. For instance, the noun-forming suffixes **-ment** (government, agreement) and **-age** (courage, marriage), giving an abstract meaning to the noun, and the adjective-forming suffix **-able** (admirable, capable) were used to form new words. Examples of such *hybrids*, as they are called, are:

¹ The English-Danish aristocracy were *earls* (*jarls*) and *knights*, and the Norman-French aristocracy were *dukes* and *barons*.

fulfilment	bondage	readable
bewilderment	cottage	unbearable
bewitchment	stoppage	drinkable

4) The French prefix **dis-** was used to make up words of negative meaning: distrust, distaste.

5) The indefinite article was coming into use.

6) The struggle for supremacy between French and old English words went on in the following way:

a) If the French word meant a thing or idea for which there was no name in English, then the French word came into the language. Such words were those relating to government, church, court, armour, pleasure, food, art.

b) If the object or idea was clearly expressed in English, then the English word remained.

c) If both words remained, then it was because of a slight but clear-cut difference in the meaning. An interesting example is to be found in the first chapter of "Ivanhoe" by Sir Walter Scott. Wamba, a Saxon serf, tells the swineherd Gurth that his swine will be turned into Normans before morning. The Anglo-Saxon word "swine" means the living animals, while the French word "pork" is the name of the food. Other examples are:

calf — veal, ox — beef, sheep — mutton.

7) As a result of this process there appeared a large store of synonyms. Each of them has its own shade of meaning. The use of one or other of these synonyms makes all the difference between the written and the spoken language. Note the difference between the following verbs; those of Anglo-Saxon origin are used in conversation, while the verbs of French origin are used in formal speech:

to give up	— to abandon
to give in	} — to surrender
to give over	
to come in	— to enter
to begin	— to commence
to go on	— to continue

The history of English literature shows us how the popular tongue became the language of the educated classes because it was spoken by the majority of the population, by those who tilled the soil, sowed and reaped, by those who produced the goods and struggled against the foreign oppressors.

Norman-French and Anglo-Saxon were moulded into one national language only towards the beginning of the 14th century when the



A lecture at Paris University in the 13th century. (Relief from the cathedral of Notre Dame, Paris.)

Hundred Years' War broke out. The language of that time is called Middle English.

The First Universities, Oxford and Cambridge. Before the 12th century people thought that books and any kind of learning belonged to the Church only, and that common people who were not priests or monks had no business to meddle with books. But with the development of such sciences as medicine and law, corporations of general study called "universitas" appeared in Italy and France. A fully developed university had four faculties: three superior (higher) faculties, that of Theology (the study of religious books), of Canon Law (church laws) and of Medicine; and one inferior (primary) faculty, that of Art, where seven subjects were

studied: Latin Grammar, Rhetoric (the art of expressive speaking), Logic, Arithmetic, Geometry, Astronomy and Music.

Paris was the great centre of higher education for English students. In the middle of the 12th century a controversy on the study of Logic arose among the professors. A group of professors were expelled. Followed by their students, they went over to Britain and in 1168 founded schools in the town of Oxford which formed the first university. A second university was formed in 1209 in Cambridge, to which a large group of students migrated from Oxford.

The graduates were awarded degrees: Bachelor, Master and Doctor.

Towards the end of the 13th century colleges where other subjects were studied appeared around the universities.

It became the custom for students to go about from one university to another, learning what they could from the most famous teachers in each place.

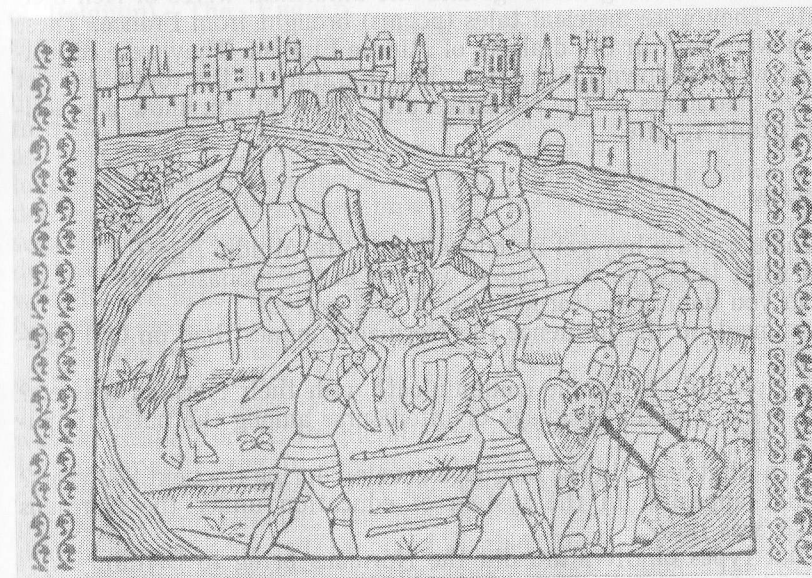
THE ROMANCE, THE FABLE AND THE FABLEAU

Romances. During the Anglo-Norman period feudal culture was at its height. Tales in verse and lyrical poems appeared praising the bravery and gallantry of noble knights, their heroic deeds and chival-

rous attitude towards ladies. At first they were all in Norman-French. Many of the stories came from old French sources, the language of which was a Romanic dialect, and for that reason these works were called "romances". They were brought to England by medieval poets called "trouvères" (finders), who came from France with the Norman conquerors. Later in England such poets were called minstrels, and their art of composing romances and ballads and singing them to the accompaniment of a lute was called the art of minstrelsy.

A number of romances were based on Celtic legends, especially those about King Arthur and the knights of the Round Table. The heroes of these romances, unlike the characters of Church literature, were human beings who loved, hated and suffered. Their worship of fair ladies motivated the plots of the stories.

King Arthur, a historical character and the national hero of the Celts, was described as an ideal feudal king endowed with all the virtues of a hero. He possessed magical powers, and was helped by Merlin, the cunning wizard. Arthur was honest, and wise, and fair to all his vassals, the knights. They had their meetings at a round table so that all should be equal.



A page of Malory's book "Death of Arthur" (1529).

In the 15th century **Sir Thomas Malory** collected the romances of King Arthur and arranged them in a series of stories in prose. They began with the birth of Arthur and how he became king, then related all the adventures of King Arthur and his noble knights and ended in the death of these knights and of Arthur himself.

The work was published in 1485 by Caxton, the first English printer, at Westminster (London), under the title of "Sir Thomas Malory's Book of King Arthur and of His Noble Knights of the Round Table". The book was more widely known as "Morte d'Arthur" (Old French for "Death of Arthur").

This epic in twenty-one books reflects the evolution of feudal society, its ideals, beliefs and tragedies. In the "Death of Arthur" the author describes not only the end of a hero's life; the very title of the book implies that the epoch of knighthood, medieval chivalry and feudalism has come to an end.

Sir Thomas Malory's "Morte d'Arthur" is the last work in English literature to depict dying feudalism.

The Fable and the Fabliau. In the literature of the townsfolk we find the fable and the fabliau ['fæbliu]. Fables were short stories with animals for characters and conveying a moral. Fabliaux were funny stories about cunning humbugs and the unfaithful wives of rich merchants. They were metrical tales (poems) brought from France. These stories were told in the dialects of Middle English. They were collected and written down much later. The literature of the towns did not idealize characters as the romances did. The fabliaux show a practical attitude to life.

Exercises

1. Where could a boy get an education in the Middle Ages?
2. In what language were books written at the monasteries?
3. Can you name any learned men of that period?
4. Comment on the influence the Norman Conquest had on Old English.
 - a) How did the people communicate with their Norman masters?
 - b) What was the language of intercourse among the native population?
 - c) In what way did the language develop during the next 200 years?
5. What appeared in the system of education under the Normans that was new?
6. What types of literature did the Normans bring to Britain?
7. In what respect is Thomas Malory's book "Death of Arthur" illustrative of social history?

THE PRE-RENAISSANCE PERIOD IN ENGLAND

England in the 14th Century. In the first half of the 14th century the Norman kings made London their residence. It became the most populous town in England. The London dialect was the central (midland) dialect, and could be understood throughout the country. It was the London dialect from which the national language developed. The burghesses (bourgeoisie) became rich through trading with Flanders (a country across the Channel that is now part of Belgium). The English shipped wool to Flanders where it was sold as raw material. King Edward III was a powerful feudal lord. He wished to make himself king of France as well, because some provinces, such as Normandy, had once belonged to England and others had belonged to Edward's mother, a French princess. While Edward was determined to get back these provinces, the king of France decided to seize the free towns of Flanders, which supported England, and thus deprive her of her wool-market. A collision was inevitable. The war with France began in 1337 and is now called the Hundred Years' War because it lasted over a hundred years.

England was successful at the beginning of the war and won several important battles. But the ruin of France and famine brought about a terrible disease called the Plague. It was so infectious that there was no escape from it. People affected died within twenty-four hours. It was brought over to England from France. The English soldiers called it the Black Death. By the year 1348 one-third of England's population had perished. The peasants who survived were forced by drastic measures to till the land of their lords because there were not enough labourers to do the work. A law called "The Statute ['stætju:t] of Labourers" was issued in 1351; it was a step back to feudalism.



London Bridge (Middle Ages).



A medieval market-place.



Wat Tyler and Jack Straw entering London.

As more money for the war was needed, Parliament voted for extra taxes. The "Poll Tax" particularly fanned the flame of discontent among the people ("poll" means "head"; it was a tax paid for every member of the family). But nothing made the people so angry as the rich foreign bishops of the Catholic Church who carried on their policy with little regard for the sufferings of the people. In 1381, during the reign of Richard II, the oppressed peasants revolted. Sixty thousand people from the counties of Essex and Kent marched to London led by Wat Tyler and Jack Straw. But the rebellion was suppressed. Wat Tyler was treacherously murdered and the peasants were dispersed.

THE LITERATURE OF THE 14th CENTURY

The protest against the Catholic Church and the growth of national feeling during the first years of the war found an echo in literature. There appeared poor priests who wandered from one village to another and talked to the people. They protested not only against rich bishops but also against churchmen who were ignorant and could not teach the people anything.

William Langland (1332?—1400?). One such poor priest was the poet William Langland. His parents were poor but free peasants. He denounced the rich churchmen and said that everybody was obliged to work. His name is remembered for a poem he wrote, "The Visions of William Concerning Piers the Ploughman". (Nowadays the poem is called "Piers Plowman". Piers [p'ɪəz] — Peter.)

The poem "Piers Plowman" is a dream allegory. Vice and Virtue¹ are spoken of as if they were human beings. Truth is a young maiden, Greed is an old witch. There are many themes. The author suddenly darts from allegory to real history. The poem was exceedingly popular in the Middle Ages. It was one of the last written in alliterative verse.

The content is as follows. On a fine May day, the poet William went to the Malvern Hills. After a time he fell asleep in the open. Piers the Ploughman is a peasant who appears in the dream of the poet. Piers tells him about the hard life of the people. It is the peasants alone who work and keep the monks and the lords in comfort, and the monks think they do quite enough by praying for the peasants.

Langland's attacks on the evils of the Church are the most outspoken of his time. The poem helped the people to concentrate their minds on the necessity to fight for their rights. Before the Peasants' Revolt of 1381, the poem was used to formulate proclamations which easily spread among the people.



John Wyclif (1320?—1384). John Wyclif was also a poor English priest. He started to write much later than Langland. He was a student at Oxford, later he was employed as counsel for the Crown in a debate about papal claims. He was sent on a mission to Bruges [bru:ʒ] (Flanders) in 1374. He challenged everything that set the Pope of Rome above the English

¹ The evil qualities of man are called "vice" and the moral qualities of man are called "virtue".

bishops. He denied the Church's right to be rich, declared the Catholic Church to be corrupt and appealed to the authorities to reform it.

John Wyclif had developed his views on the Church by 1377, which views may be called the first step towards materialistic ideas in England. Wyclif denied the miraculous change of things from one substance into another — as the conversion of bread and wine into the body and blood of Christ together with his soul (one of the chief principles of the Roman Catholics), — which brought him into conflict with one of the English bishops. He told his associates to leave the Church and go among the people to teach the truth.

Wyclif met the demand of the people by translating the Bible into English. In those days it was a daring thing to do. The last years of his life he lived in retirement occupied with his literary work and organizing his "poor priests".

Wyclif is remembered because he discussed political questions with the common people in the common tongue, and because he translated the Bible into English. He set the authority of the Bible against the authority of the Church. Thus he developed the English mind and helped the peasants to prepare for the uprising of 1381. After his death the Pope ordered his writings to be destroyed and his body to be dug up and burnt and the ashes to be thrown into a river.

The followers of Wyclif were called "Lollards",¹ and their work among the people was called the "Lollard movement". John Ball, a follower of Wyclif, was very popular among the common people. He turned parts of Langland's "Piers Plowman" into proclamations; he recited "Piers Plowman" when he talked to the people and often ended with Wyclif's words:

When Adam delved² and Eve span³
Who was then the Gentleman?

¹ "Lollard" is a Dutch word, it means "mumble", "speak"; it was a nickname given to the poor priests.

² to delve — to dig the earth, to till.

³ span — spun *old form*; to spin — to twist wool into thread.

Geoffrey

Chaucer

(1340—1400)



His Life and Work

The greatest writer of the 14th century was Geoffrey l'dʒeʃrɪ Chaucer. He was born in London, soon after the Hundred Years' War broke out. His father, John Chaucer, was a London wine merchant. He had connections with the court and hoped for a courtier's career for his son, and at seventeen Geoffrey became page to a lady at the court of Edward III.

At twenty, Chaucer was in France serving as a squire (arms-bearer to a knight) and was then taken prisoner by the French. His friends helped to ransom¹ him.

On his return to England, Chaucer passed into attendance on John of Gaunt, Duke of Lancaster, the fourth son of the king.

During 1373 and the next few years, Chaucer travelled much and lived a busy life. He went to France on a mission connected with a peace-treaty. He made three journeys to Italy, which made a deep impression upon him. Italy was the first country where the bourgeoisie

¹ to ransom — to buy the freedom of ...

triumphed over feudalism, and it was there that Chaucer saw the first city-republics. Italian literature was at its height and opened to Chaucer a new world of art.

Chaucer's **earliest poems** were written in imitation of the French romances. He translated from French a famous allegorical poem of the 13th century, "The Romance of the Rose". Though the poem is very long, its plot is simple: a young man falls asleep and dreams of a garden in which there is a Rose that he desires to own. He is helped by such virtues as Beauty, Wealth and Hospitality, and hampered by such vices as Pride, Poverty and Evil Report.¹ After a long time he gets the Rose.

The second period of Chaucer's literary work was that of the Italian influence. To this period belong the following poems: "The House of Fame", a didactic poem; "The Parliament of Fowls" (birds), an allegorical poem satirizing Parliament; "Troilus and Cressida l'troulès and 'kresida]", considered to be the predecessor of the psychological novel in England, and "The Legend of Good Women", a dream-poem.

Chaucer was well read in ancient literature. Italian literature of the time taught him the importance of national literature in the life of a nation.

When Chaucer came back to England, he received the post of Controller of the Customs in the port of London. Chaucer held this position ten years. He devoted his free time to hard study and writing.

In 1377 King Edward III died. His ten-year-old grandson Richard succeeded him. A band of uncles who disagreed with each other acted as regents. At first all went well with Chaucer. He was appointed "Knight for the shire of Kent", which meant that he sat in Parliament as a representative for Kent. He often had to go on business to Kent and there he observed the pilgrimages to Canterbury. Travelling in those days was very dangerous, and several times Chaucer was robbed of money which was in his charge.

However, these duties grew very tiresome to the poet; he longed for leisure to write. He petitioned the king several times for permission to give up his post, and finally the king granted him a pension so that he could enjoy the leisure he so desired. But after his patron John of Gaunt went to Spain, Chaucer lost his offices and all his pension. He became so poor that he had to borrow money for food.

The third period of Chaucer's creative work begins in the year 1384 when he started writing his masterpiece, "The Canterbury Tales".

When the new king, Henry IV, came to the throne in 1399, the poet immediately addressed a poem to him, "The Complaints of Chaucer

to His Empty Purse", with the result that his old pension was given back to him and a new one granted. Chaucer died in 1400 and was buried in Westminster Abbey. Chaucer was the last English writer of the Middle Ages and the first of the Renaissance.

"THE CANTERBURY TALES"

"The Canterbury Tales" are a series of stories written in verse. The framework which serves to connect them is a pilgrimage to Canterbury. The distance from London to Canterbury is 60 miles, but in those days there was no straight road to go by.

Pilgrimages of every kind were extremely common in Chaucer's time. Such journeys were no doubt very valuable as a means by which to break the monotony of life in days when there were no newspapers, no printed books, nor any theatres. Many people looked forward to them as to pleasant holiday excursions. The months for these pilgrimages were April and May, because spring is the best season in the British Isles.

The most popular English pilgrimage was to Canterbury. Second to Canterbury was the town of Chester where people could see plays based on Bible stories performed in the churches. Pilgrimage towns were crowded with inns and churches. Bells were constantly ringing. Some churches had relics of the saints, and people believed these had the miraculous power to cure diseases. Other people were attracted by the beautiful monuments. At Canterbury Cathedral there is the shrine of Thomas Becket, a bishop of the 12th century, who struggled against the king for the independence of the Church. He was murdered by the order of King Henry II, and later made a Catholic saint.

The pilgrimage was a "democratic institution", which means that rich and poor, noble and peasant rode side by side and stopped at the same inns.

Chaucer opens his work with a prologue to the whole work.



Canterbury Pilgrims from an illustration to the work of Lydgate, Chaucer's disciple.

¹ Evil Report — ill words spoken on purpose against someone.



The Knight. Woodcut from Caxton's "Canterbury Tales", printed in 1484.

THE PROLOGUE

In the prologue thirty men and women from all ranks of society pass before our eyes. Chaucer draws a rapid portrait of each traveller, thus showing his character.

There was a brave knight who loved truth, honour and generosity. He had been in armed expeditions in the Mediterranean, had travelled in the North and had even been to Russia. His son was a young squire with curled hair. His clothes were "as gay as a meadow with white and red flowers" and he had long white sleeves. He had been on cavalry raids in France and had fought well "in hope to win his Lady's grace".¹ Their servant was a yeoman² dressed in the clothes of a forester.

They were followed by two nuns and three priests. One of the nuns was a prioress, the head of the nunnery. She had a long face and a small mouth and wept easily: "A mouse in a trap would make her cry". She could sing all that was sung in churches and spoke French as it was spoken in England, for "French in the Paris style she did not know". She had very good manners at table. She never let a crumb fall from her lips and never dipped her fingers deep in the sauce. "And she was dressed with graceful charm."

There was a fat monk who loved hunting and a good dinner better than prayers. His hood and his sleeves were decorated with fine fur and his greyhounds and horse were of the best. Another monk, though not so rich, also liked to have a good time: "He knew the taverns well in every town and every innkeeper and barmaid too".

A student of Oxford in a shabby cloak rode a lean horse. He was thin and pale: "Whatever money from his friends he took, he spent on learning and another book".

There was another woman in the company, the wife of a burgess (merchant). She was merry and strong, though no longer young, and

¹ Fragments from the "Canterbury Tales" printed in this book are given in a twentieth-century translation by Nevill Coghill.

² A yeoman was a free peasant of whom military aid was expected.

a little hard of hearing. She had red cheeks and red stockings on her fat legs, and her hat was as broad as a shield. She came from the town of Bath and was mounted on a good horse. She liked to talk of her youth and her five husbands.

Then we see other townsfolk: a merchant with a forked beard "always talking about his profits but telling nobody of his debts"; a man of law "who was less busy than he seemed to be".

Then came a poor priest and his brother, a ploughman, riding a mare. The ploughman was a hard worker with a true heart, and the priest was one of those who never talked much and who did all he could to help the poor. He was "the doer of the word before he taught it".

A very stout fellow with red hair and a broad red beard trotted beside them. "His mighty mouth was like a furnace door." This disagreeable man was a miller. His language was very rude. Dishonest in his work, "his was a master-hand at stealing grain".

Not far behind them rode some other servants of the Church. One of them had greedy eyes and yellow hair "that thinly fell like rat-tails one by one". He sold relics: pigbones in small glass cases, which he said were the bones of saints. He also sold "pardons", "hot from the Court of Rome" (that is to say, he sold papers signed in advance by the Pope, and those who bought them had their sins pardoned). "He got more money in a day than a peasant in two months."

Several other professional men and some tradesmen of the time were there too: a tax-collector, a physician, a carpenter and a shipman, even a provisioner and a cook.

Finally we see Chaucer himself and a certain Harry Bailly, the host (owner) of a London inn, from which they all started on the journey.

Harry Bailly wished to accompany them. On the night before, he had proposed the following plan: each pilgrim was to tell two stories on the way to the shrine and two on the way back, and he, the host, would be their guide and would judge their stories. He who told the best story was to have a fine supper at the expense of the others.

Before each new story begins, there is a short prologue in which the host speaks to the story-teller. He wants the stories to be inter-



The Wife of Bath. Woodcut from Caxton's "Canterbury Tales", printed in 1484.

esting. He also takes care that the friendship which has grown up among the pilgrims should not change to hostility. Chaucer keeps all his characters alive in these conversations with the host.

The spirit of the day is felt best in the only story based on events typical of Chaucer's time. This is the tale of the canon's yeoman. It deals with the secret of the philosopher's stone and shows what science was like at that time.

PROLOGUE TO THE TALE OF THE CANON'S YEOMAN

The pilgrims were nearing Canterbury when they were overtaken by two horsemen. The horses were sweating so much, they must have been ridden at top speed for fully three miles. One rider, dressed in black, was a canon,¹ the other was his yeoman. When they caught up with the pilgrims the canon cried:

"God save this jolly company; I have spurred fast on account of you." His yeoman added: "We wished to overtake you, for my lord and master is eager to ride with such a merry group."

"Can he tell any kind of merry tale with which to gladden this company?" asked the host.

"Who, sir? My master? Why! He is such a marvel he could pave all the road with silver and gold."

"But if your master is such a clever man, why is his coat so dirty and all in rags?" the host asked.

"Oh," said the yeoman, "he is too wise, and what is overdone will never come out right. He misuses his talents, God help him."

"Well," said the host, "since you understand your master so well, tell us where you live, if it can be told."

"On the outskirts of a town," the yeoman answered, "we lurk in corners like thieves afraid to show ourselves."

"Why is your face so discoloured?" the host suddenly asked.

"Saint Peter, bad luck! I am so used to blowing the fire that it changed my colour. We continually creep around the fire. We deceive many people. We borrow gold, be it a pound or more; we melt it and boil it and mix it and hope to make at least two pounds from one. But in spite of all our efforts it always turns out wrong. That science is too far ahead of us, we cannot overtake it and it will sooner turn us to beggars."

Here the canon drew near to listen to his yeoman. A man who is guilty is always suspicious of everyone who talks about him.

¹ A canon was a priest who possessed knowledge of church laws.

"Hold your tongue," he said, "or you shall pay for it dearly. How dare you slander me here in this company. Don't speak of things you should keep secret."

"Go on," said the host, "don't you care a farthing about his threats."

"In faith, I don't care much any longer."

When the canon saw that he could not have his way, he fled in grief and shame.

"Ah," said the yeoman, "now we'll have some fun. I wish I had the wit to tell you the details of that art. Nevertheless, I'll tell you something of it. Never will I have anything more to do with my master for penny or for pound. What I know I'll tell!"

THE TALE OF THE CANON'S YEOMAN

I served this canon seven years; but I know no more about Philosophy than I knew before.

I am in debt for gold that I have borrowed, and I know I shall never live long enough to repay it. Mind my words.

When we begin work, our terms are so strange and so scholarly that we seem wonderfully wise to ourselves. Why should I tell you of the exact proportions of the things we work with? I shall tell you about the four vapours and seven bodies as it was taught to me, in the order my master names them:

Sun is gold	Mercury is quicksilver
Moon is silver	Saturn is lead
Mars is iron	Jupiter is tin
Venus is copper	by the soul of my father!

He who practises this accursed craft of transmuting metals, loses everything he invests in it. He shall not have enough for his needs. It never turns into gold. Let any man who has money become a philosopher; whether he has book-learning or not, the end is just the same. Our losses drive us crazy; but then hoping for success, we start all over again. You can't give up the game. You can't stop until there is nothing left.

Many times it happens that the pot breaks to pieces and all is lost. These metals are so violent. Some bury themselves in the earth, some break the walls of the house, some shoot up to the roof. Though the devil never shows himself in our sight, I'm sure he is with us all the time, the old scoundrel!

When the pot breaks, everyone scoffs and considers himself cheated. Then they all shout at one another.

One says, "The fire was not laid the way it should." Another says, "The flames were not properly blown." That's when I'm frightened because that's my job. A third says, "You are ignorant and stupid, the metal was not properly tempered."

He that seems the wisest is the most foolish when it comes to the proof. And he that seems the most honest is a thief. You should know that before I leave you.

SECOND PART OF THE TALE OF THE CANON'S YEOMAN

This is going to be a story of another canon who was a hundred times more skilled in trickery than my master. He was so treacherously clever that he could poison a whole town though it were as great as Rome or Alexandria. He usually made a fool of anyone who did business with him, because his sly words soon talked the person over.

A man engaged with him in conversation
Soon finds his brain is dizzy with rotation,
Unless the man's a devil like himself...

Many a man had this canon deceived and yet men walked and rode many miles to seek him and to make his acquaintance.

Meanwhile there was a priest in London who had lived there for many years by singing for the dead, and who was so pleasant and helpful to the house-wife where he boarded that she would not allow him to pay anything for board and clothing.

So pleasant was he in his manner and so able,
The lady in whose house he sat at table,
Refused to take a farthing's worth of pay
For board and clothes, whatever his display;

I now will tell you about this scoundrel, the canon, who gave the priest good cause to weep and wail.

One day the false canon entered the room where the priest slept, begging him to lend a certain amount of gold (a mark) which he promised to pay back in three days. And so he did. He really brought the money back and the foolish priest thought him a very honourable man.

This treacherous canon, then, came in one day,
Entered the priest's apartment where he lay
And begged him to advance a certain sum,
Which was to be repaid him, saying, "Come,
Lend me a mark, it's only for three days,

I'll pay you on the nail,¹ I'm one who pays.
And if I fail you when you come to check,
Another time just hang me by the neck!"

This priest produced the money on the spot;
The canon after thanking him a lot,
Took leave of him and went upon his way
And brought his money back the proper day.
When it had been paid back and matters righted,
The foolish priest of course was quite delighted
And said, "Trust me, I never take offence
If someone comes to borrow a few pence,
Or anything I have in my possession,
When he's an honest man of good profession
And doesn't break his day if he should owe;
To such a man I never can say no."

"What!" said the canon. "I not pay when due?
That would be something altogether new!
My honour is a thing I hope to keep
For ever, till the moment when I creep
Into my grave. God send I do indeed!"

The canon, who pretended to be very grateful to the priest, said he wished to do him a good turn. He said he knew the secret of the philosopher's stone and he would teach him a science that worked miracles.

"I'll tell you something, if you care to learn,
In simple language, how I came to turn
My talents toward alchemy and science.
Watch! You can place an absolute reliance
On seeing me work a miracle ere² I go."
"What!" said the priest. "Can that be really so?
Mother of God! I beg you to proceed!"

This was just the very thing to rouse the priest. His eyes shone with avarice (greed). Because of his avarice he finally fell into the canon's trap.

¹ to pay on the nail — to pay without delay.
² ere — before.

The priest had no idea with whom he dealt,
And what was coming to him never felt.
Oh, foolish priest! Oh, innocent in bliss,
Soon to be blinded and by avarice!

"Sir," said the canon, "send your man for an ounce or two of quicksilver and let us have it at once. As soon as he returns, you shall see such a miracle as you never saw before."

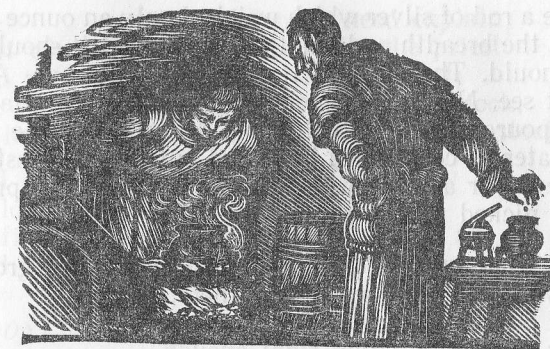
When the man brought the quicksilver, he was sent out to bring coals. Then the canon took a crucible from inside his robe and showed it to the priest. "Take this instrument which you see in my hand," he said. "Put an ounce of quicksilver in it yourself, and with that you begin, in the name of Christ, to become a philosopher. You will now actually see that I shall change this quicksilver into real silver right before your eyes. I will make it into as good and fine silver as the money that is in your purse, or in mine, or elsewhere. I have here a powder which will accomplish all this. It is the root of all my skill which I shall show you. Send your man away, so that he should not spy upon us while we work in alchemy."

"I have a powder here that cost the earth
And it will make all good, for it's the basis
Of all my power — I'll show you — in these cases.
Send your man off, tell him to wait outside,
And shut the door on him. I won't be spied
Upon at work, for no one else must see
The way we set to work in alchemy."
He gave his orders and the thing was done,
The servant was sent packing at a run,
The chamber door was bolted with a jerk
And these philosophers got down to work.

The priest then set the vessel on the fire and blew the fire, working very busily, and the canon threw a powder into the crucible which wasn't worth a fly but it deceived the priest. Then the canon told the priest to place a bed of coals above the crucible with his own hands.

The canon said, "In what we're going to do,
I'll leave the handling of it all to you."
"Oh, thank you!" said the priest, who was delighted
And couched the coals just as he was invited.

While he was busy, this devilish wretch, the canon, pulled a coal from inside his robe. It was a beech coal which had been carefully



prepared before; a hole had been drilled in it and it was filled with an ounce of silver filings, and stoppered with blackened wax to keep the filings in.

The canon took his coal and hiding it in his hand, said, "Friend, you're doing the work wrong, this is not as it should be; let me mend it. You are very hot, I can see you sweat. Here, take this cloth and wipe your face. While the priest was wiping his face, the canon placed his coal in the middle of the coals above the crucible and blew the fire.

And while the priest was mopping up his face,
The canon took his coal — the damned disgrace! —
And stuck it in the middle somewhat higher
Than was the crucible, and blew the fire
Till up it flamed and all the coals were red.

"And now let's have a drink," the canon said;
"All will be well quite soon, I'll undertake.
Sit down, let's cheer ourselves for goodness sake."

When the canon's beechwood coal had burnt, all the filings fell down into the crucible, which was only natural. And then the canon said, "Get up, sir priest. Since you have no mould, go out and get us a chalk-stone. I'll make it into the shape of a mould. And also bring with you a dish of water and then you will see how well our business will prosper. Wait, I will go with you. I will never be a moment out of sight, and you won't have any suspicion of me."

They went out, then shut the door of the room taking the key with them. On their return the canon took the chalk-stone and shaped it in the form of a mould. Now notice the accursed trick. He took from

his own sleeve a rod of silver which weighed only an ounce and shaped a mould from the breadth and length of it, so that it should fit in the chalk-stone mould. Then he hid it again in his sleeve. All this the priest did not see. Next, the canon picked up his materials from the fire merrily, poured them into the mould and threw the mould into the dish of water to cool. Then he called out to the priest to put his hand into the water and see what there was there. The priest put in his hand and picked up the rod of fine silver.

"Look what we've got, put in your hand and grope
And you will find some silver there, I hope."
What else could have been the stuff?
Silver filings are silver right enough.

Thrilled to the veins to see this silver rod
The priest said: "Bless you and the Mother of God
And all his saints preserve you, worthy master!"
He cried: "And may they bring me to disaster
Unless you will vouchsafe your kind compliance¹
In teaching me this noble art and science."

"Well," said the canon, "let me try again;
We'll have a second shot; pay careful heed
And you'll become an expert."

The canon was fully prepared to deceive the priest a second time, but instead of a beech coal he used a hollow stick with silver filings in it, with which he stirred the mixture.

And when this priest had been deceived again
And taken it all for gospel, right as rain,
He was so happy that I can't express
In words his ecstasy of happiness.

When they tried a third test with copper, the canon managed to drop his own silver rod out of his sleeve into the cooling pan. Since it fitted into the same mould, the priest believed that the copper had turned into silver. He was so glad to have learned the art, that he asked the canon to sell him the powder and the formula of the process. The canon agreed to sell it for forty pounds. As soon as he got the money he left the town and was never seen again.

¹ Unless you will vouchsafe your kind compliance... — Unless you will be kind enough to agree...

I hardly need explain
That when he tried experiments, the priest
Had no success whatever, not the least;
The powder would not work, it was a mock,
He had been tricked and made a laughing-stock.

So I conclude: since God will not allow
Philosophers to tell their pupils how
To find this stone, no doubt it's better so,
And my advice would be to let it go.

THE PARDONER'S¹ TALE

Three rioters, three evil-doing men, were sitting in a tavern having a drink. And as they sat there they heard a hand-bell ring and saw a coffin being carried past them in the street. So one of them said to the tavern-boy, "Go and find out at once whose corpse is in that coffin, and mind you don't forget his name."

"Sir," said the boy, "there is no need for me to go. Just before you came in I was told that this dead man, who used to be a friend of yours, had died last night. We've got a thief round here called Death. He killed a thousand people in the present plague, and having killed he goes away without a word."

"What the child says is right," added the innkeeper. "You better be careful too, and look out you don't meet him on the road."

"Is he as fierce as that?" cried the rioter. "Then I'll search for him." And he turned to the other two rioters and said, "Here, chaps, we'll go all three together and we'll be brothers in this affair and each defend the others. And we will kill this traitor Death." And the other two rioters joined in shouting at the top of their voices: "If we can only catch him, Death is dead."

And the three rioters set out to find the enemy of mankind. They had not walked half a mile when they met a very poor old man who humbly greeted them. But the proudest of the three young men answered, "What, old fool? Give place! Why live so long? Isn't it time for you to die?"

The old man answered quietly that he would gladly die, but since he had as yet never met a man who would give away youth and take from him his old age, he was compelled to live on and couldn't help it. Then he told them not to speak roughly to an old man who did not mean to injure them.

¹ A pardoner was a servant of the Church in the Middle Ages who sold "pardons" from the Pope. (For "pardons" see page 35).

He wanted to go away, but the second rioter, who was a gambler, barred his way: "We won't let you go off so easily. We heard you mention the traitor Death. You are most probably his spy; now wait a bit, say where he is or you shall pay for it."

"Well, Sirs," said the old man, "if you have made up your mind to find Death, you needn't go far. Turn up this crooked way to that grove. You'll find Death waiting under an oak. He isn't one to hide."

At once the three young rioters began
To run, and reached the tree, and there they found
A pile of golden florins on the ground,
New-coined, eight bushels of them as they thought.
No longer was it Death those fellows sought,
For they were all so thrilled to see the sight,
The florins were so beautiful and bright,
That down they sat beside the precious pile.
The wickedest spoke first after a while.
"Brothers," he said, "you listen to what I say.
I'm pretty sharp, although I joke away.
It's clear that Fortune has bestowed this treasure
To let us live in jollity and pleasure.
Light come, light go! We'll spend it as we ought.
God's precious dignity! Who would have thought
This morning was to be our lucky day?
If one could only get this gold away,
Back to my house, or else to yours, perhaps, —
For as you know the gold is ours, chaps, —
We'd all be at the top of fortune, hey?
But certainly it can't be done by day.
People would call us robbers — a strong gang,
So our own property would make us hang.
No, we must bring this treasure back by night
Some prudent way and keep it out of sight."

He then proposed to draw lots: the man whose luck was to draw the longest lot was to run to town and fetch bread and wine, while the two others were to stay behind and guard the gold. And after dark they would all three carry it away.

The lot fell to the youngest and he ran off. No sooner was he gone than the wicked men made another plan: "We have a chance," one of them said, "to get each a larger share of the gold if we divide it into two parts and not into three. If you want me to do you a friendly turn, do as



I tell you: as soon as the young fellow comes back, have a wrestle with him as if for fun, and while you are struggling, I'll come up and put my dagger through his back, and when he falls, you will do the same and finish him."

In the meantime the youngest, who had nearly reached the town, kept thinking about the gold pieces until it struck him that he could take them all for himself. If he got some poison he could do away with his two friends, and then the gold would be all his own.

At first he got the bread and wine. Then he found an apothecary who was selling poison to kill rats. He bought some. Then he found a man who lent him three bottles. One bottle he kept clean for his own use and into the other two he poured the poison. Then he filled them all with wine and walked back to the grove.

When he reached the oak, the first two rioters did exactly as they had planned: they fell on the young one and killed him, which was not hard to do since they were two to one.

Then said the first of them when this was done:
"Now for a drink. Sit down and let's be merry,
For later on there'll be the corpse to bury."
And as it happened, reaching for a sup
He took a bottle full of poison up
And drank; and his companion, nothing loth,
Drank from it also, and they perished both.

Thus these two murderers received their due,
So did the treacherous young poisoner too.

CHAUCER'S CONTRIBUTION TO LITERATURE

1. "The Canterbury Tales" sums up all types of stories that existed in the Middle Ages: the Knight tells a romance; the Nun, a story of a saint; the Miller, a fabliau (a funny story); the Priest, a fable (a moral tale), etc. Some of these stories were known only in Norman-French before Chaucer. Chaucer also used the writings of his near contemporaries as well as the works of writers of ancient times and distant lands.

2. But the most important thing about Chaucer is that he managed to show all ranks of society, all types of people that lived during his time, and through these people he shows a true picture of the life of the 14th century.

a) It was very common to criticize the Church and churchmen, but Chaucer gives a true and impartial portrayal. Most of his churchmen are not religious at all. For instance, the Prior cares above all for good food and wine and hunting; he wants to live and enjoy himself, and the author sees nothing wicked or sinful in it. There is the Pardoner who deceives people by selling "pardons" by permission of the Pope and is well paid for it; in this character there is much biting criticism of the Church. At the same time Chaucer shows us the poor priest. He knew churchmen of this type: they protested against social inequality in general (Langland was one of them), and hated the rich and ignorant bishops.

b) Long before Malory, Chaucer saw signs of the end of feudalism. During Chaucer's time there appeared in England men of a new type, who had features of the bourgeoisie of the following epoch. They had no feudal prejudices, and cared for money alone. Chaucer understood quite clearly that men like the Miller and the Merchant would conquer the future. Yet he regretted that the chivalrous ideals of feudalism were retreating into the past. Chaucer shows us the Knight and the Squire, father and son, — men of different epochs and ethics. The Knight is an honest champion of his medieval ideals, and needs practically nothing for himself, the Squire prefers luxury and safety to the dangers his father had been through; he is a courtier in the true sense of the word.

c) The Ploughman, "an honest worker, good and true", and his brother, the Poor Priest, were the only characters who escaped Chaucer's satire. They came from peasant stock. Yet, when the uprising of 1381 broke out, Chaucer saw in the mass of peasants "a people undiscreet";¹ he called them so because he did not trust them.

¹ The word "undiscreet" is not used now; in Middle English "a people undiscreet" meant "a trustless people".

3. Chaucer was the creator of a new literary language. He chose to write in the popular tongue, though the aristocracy at the time read and spoke French; even the burgesses up to the year 1362 had to deliver their speeches in Parliament in French.

A single language emerges from a number of dialects only when the people who speak these dialects have become one nation. The necessity for one common language for the English people during the Hundred Years' War was a sign that they were becoming one nation. Chaucer shared in this national feeling. He wrote in the London dialect, for it enabled him to define the typical features of his characters, to satirize feudal literature and to add humour to many an old story. His use of the many jokes popular in his time makes his poetry very lively. Chaucer made up new words which have remained in the language to this day: such as "daisy", the name of a flower, which meant "day's eye" (light); "coal-black", and "snow-white". It is to be remembered that with Chaucer's poetry the popular tongue became literary English.

Chaucer was the true founder of English literature, and when the great English poet Algernon Charles Swinburne (1837—1909) called him "our father Chaucer", he did him full justice.

4. Chaucer was by learning a man of the Middle Ages, but his attitude towards mankind was so broad-minded that his work is timeless. Chaucer did not teach his readers what is good or bad by moralizing; he was not a preacher. He merely called attention to the people around him; he drew his characters from life: he saw men as belonging to certain ranks of society. Chaucer described the individual features of his characters "according to profession and degree", so they instantly became typical of their class. When assembled, they form one people, the English people.

Chaucer is the earliest English poet who may still be read for pleasure today.

Exercises

Prepare a report or write a short composition on the following:

1. Chaucer — the last poet of the Middle Ages.
 - 1) What types of stories did Chaucer collect in his "Canterbury Tales"?
 - 2) What literature was read at court before Chaucer? What was the literature of the townfolk?
2. Chaucer — the first English poet to lay the way for the coming epoch in literature.
 - 1) Who were Chaucer's characters?

- 2) What was Chaucer's attitude towards:
 - a) religion and the churchmen?
 - b) the court and the knights?
 - c) the common people: burgesses, professional men, etc.?
3. Chaucer — the earliest English poet, father of English poetry.
 - 1) How did it come about that Chaucer wrote in English at a time when the educated people read and spoke only Norman-French?
 - 2) Why may Chaucer still be read for pleasure today?

THE LITERATURE OF THE 15th CENTURY

The Wars of the Roses. The death of Chaucer was a great blow to English poetry. It took two centuries to produce a poet equal to him. The Hundred Years' War ended, but another misfortune befell the country: in 1455 a feudal war broke out between the descendants of Edward III, which is known as the Wars of the Roses.

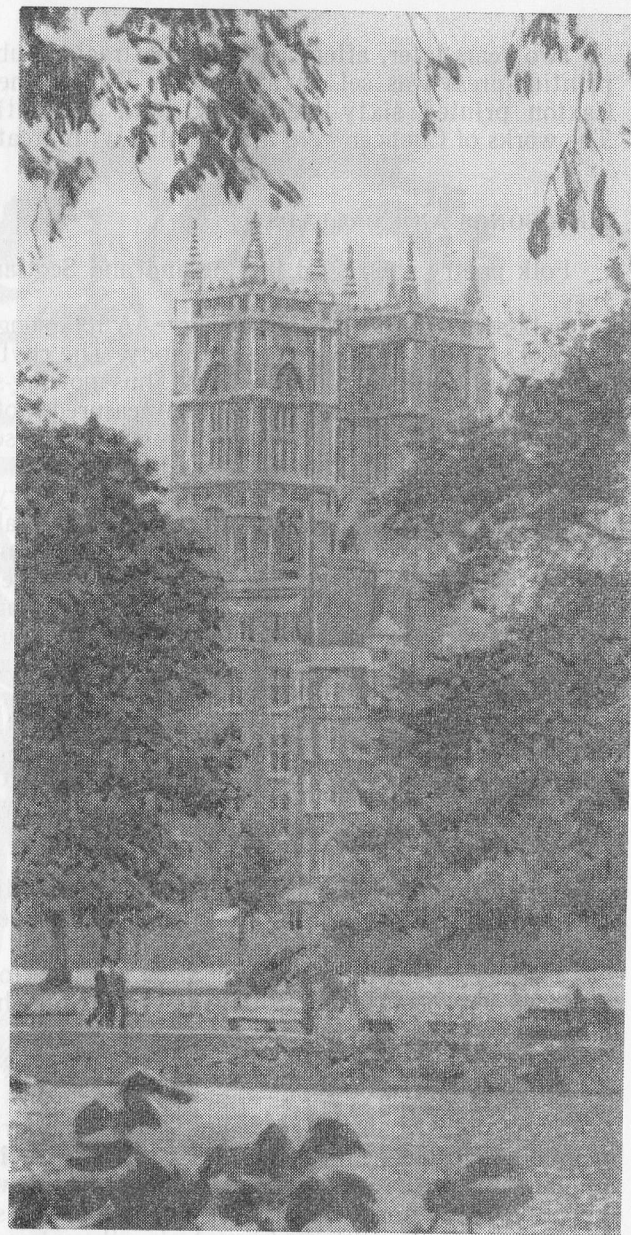
The feud turned into a bitter struggle for the crown, each party splitting up into smaller parties that murdered every likely heir to the throne. The commons took little part in the struggle. Anarchy reigned, making the exchange of knowledge almost impossible. Indeed, it was impossible for others to continue the work Chaucer had begun while the people suffered from continual war and remained completely ignorant.



William Caxton (1422?—1491).

In his early youth William Caxton was an apprentice to a company of London dealers in silk and woollen cloth. Later, he lived in Flanders, in the town of Bruges, where he worked as a hand-copier of books for the royal family. He was a

learned man and translated French histories into English. When on business in Cologne [kə'loun], a German town, he learned the art of printing. In 1476 Caxton set up the first printing-press in Westminster.



Westminster Abbey
(London).

Two years later, after Caxton had attracted public notice, a second printing-press was set up at Oxford. During the next fifteen years Caxton printed sixty-five works, both translations and originals. The works of Chaucer were also printed with great care.

FOLK-SONGS AND BALLADS

Folk poetry flourished in England and Scotland in the 15th century.

Folk-songs were heard everywhere. A folk-song is a short poem in rhymed stanzas usually set to a melody. The rhythm goes along with the subject dealt with in the song. Thus mowing-songs, spinning- and weaving-songs were made up to the measured motion of that kind of work. Harvest-songs and wedding-songs were set to the measured motion of a dance.

The most interesting examples of folk poetry were the ballads. English and Scottish ballads were either lyrical-epic poems (these were narratives), or lyrical-dramatic poems (incidents in action). Ballads were either for singing or for reciting. They were often accompanied by musical instruments (such as the bagpipes in Scotland) and dancing. The ballad became the most popular form of amusement in towns and villages because it was something intermediate between a performance and a game.

As regards the content, the ballads may be divided into three groups: historical, heroic, and romantic ballads. Historical ballads were based on a historical fact, while heroic ballads were about people who were persecuted by the law or by their own families. Among the most popular ones were those about Robin Hood, who was an outlaw.

Ballads and songs express the sentiments and thoughts of a people, therefore the author is not felt in them. They were handed down by word of mouth from generation to generation.

The art of printing did not stop the creation of folk-songs and ballads. They continued to develop till the 18th century.

THE ROBIN HOOD BALLADS

The Robin Hood ballads, numbering some forty separate ballads, were written down at various times but not earlier than in the 14th and 15th centuries. Robin Hood, England's favourite hero, is a character partly historical, partly legendary. He must have lived in the second half of the 12th century, during the reign of Henry II and his



Robin Hood.

son Richard I (the Lion-Hearted). The older ballads tell us much about the Saxon yeomen, who were famous archers and keen hunters. Being ill-treated by the Norman robber-barons, they longed to live free in the forests with Robin as their leader. The ballads always tell of persons who were robbed by the Church or the feudal barons, or imprisoned by the foresters and sheriffs.¹ Robin is the relentless enemy of the Norman oppressors and always helps the country-folk in their troubles. Though the sheriff put a big price on Robin's head, not a Saxon in all Nottinghamshire² betrayed him.

Robin is an outlaw and lives in Sherwood Forest, which in those days was quite near the town of Nottingham. He is smart and clever, "with a twinkle in the eye". Whenever the sheriff or the king sends out a party of men to catch him, Robin fights with so much vigour that his enemies, amazed at his bravery, confess themselves beaten and stay with him in the forest. They become "the merry men of Robin Hood". His friends are Little John (he is 7 feet tall); Friar Tuck, a jolly monk; and Allan-a-Dale [ˈælənəˈdeɪl], a musical young man, who was a great singer.

In the 16th century many new episodes were introduced into the ballads. They were arranged in series, the most popular of which was "The Jolly Life of Robin Hood and His Merry Men in Sherwood Forest". Here is one of the heroic Robin Hood ballads told in prose.

"THE NOTTINGHAM EXECUTION"

The new sheriff of Nottingham learned that three Saxon hunters had been captured by the foresters and charged with stealing the king's deer. All three were the sons of a poor widow who lived in the village of Mansfield. She wept bitterly when she saw her sons bound, and begged hard that they be released, but the boys were led away.

The sheriff, who was angry with Robin Hood (he had tried to capture Robin several times but had failed), ordered the prisoners to be brought to Nottingham, where they were found guilty and sentenced to be hanged in the Saxon market-place³ "as a warning to evil-doers in general and to the Saxons in particular".

That same morning Robin was walking through the forest when he met the poor old woman, who was crying as if her heart would break. Robin asked her what had happened. She told him about her sons and

¹ The sheriff was the chief officer of the king in a county or shire, responsible for administering justice and keeping the peace.

² Nottinghamshire — a county in Central England.

³ Nottingham was divided into two parts: the Norman and the Saxon quarters. Each quarter had its market-place.

said that she was going to Nottingham to ask for mercy. Robin told her that by herself she would not be able to do anything for her sons, and he vowed that he would set them free himself before three days had passed. He then blew his horn to call his merry men and plan the rescue of the three brothers.

One of his scouts had just returned from Nottingham, where he had heard the story. There was a great stir in Nottingham, he said, to see the execution that was to take place the next morning. A whisper had gone round the town that it was Robin Hood and two of his men that had been caught. People threatened to take bloody vengeance on the sheriff, if this was found to be true.

Soon after daybreak Robin started off to town. On his way he met a beggar who wore a cloak patched with black, blue and red. Robin wanted to speak to him, but the beggar said he could not stop — he was running away because the sheriff had wanted him to be the executioner. This was excellent news for Robin, who at once proposed that they should exchange clothes. Robin then hurried on to Nottingham, the streets of which he found filled with people. A cry was raised of "Hangman!" followed by some hisses which caused Robin to turn his head, and he found that a crowd was gathering at his heels.

Robin was walking as quickly as he could towards the sheriff's house, when he met the sheriff riding on horseback, followed by a number of his men, all armed with spears, on their way to the prison. Catching sight of Robin, the sheriff called out, "Well, will thou be hangman today?" Robin nodded. "It is well," said the sheriff, "thou hast saved me the trouble to look for another man."

On seeing the sheriff, the people dispersed. Robin fell into the procession of spearmen immediately behind the sheriff. When they came to the prison, the sheriff signalled Robin to bind the prisoners. This Robin immediately began to do, meanwhile managing to whisper into the ear of the eldest: "All's right! Robin Hood will be here to rescue you." Then the boys were led out and placed in a low cart where they knelt down and the cart moved on, surrounded by the sheriff's spearmen. The eldest of the prisoners took the opportunity of communicating Robin's words to his brothers.

There was a great crowd of people in the streets, and many ill words were shouted at the sheriff as he rode along. At last they came in sight of the gallows. Robin looked at the crowd as the cart stopped and, to his joy, he recognized many of his merry men.

The spearmen were ordered to clear a space around the gallows, and while the sheriff was looking after his men, Robin busied himself loosening the bonds of the brothers, who still knelt in the cart. At length the sheriff called out: "Now, hangman, waste no time." Robin

sprang up quickly and brandished the sword he held in his hand. The sheriff turned pale with rage. The three brothers jumped up with their arms loose, and Robin shouted: "Who's on Robin Hood's side?" In an instant there was a roar of voices. The slender barrier of spear-men that separated the people from the gallows was broken, the people seized the spears from the men's hands, and arming themselves, struck right and left amongst the Normans. At the same time Robin's men, numbering some fifty, pressed forward to where Robin and the brothers now stood. A sword was thrust into each brother's hand and he used it with vigour. The sheriff was seized and hanged on the gallows put up for the three brothers.

Here is one of the best-known Robin Hood ballads in modern English spelling.

ROBIN HOOD AND ALLAN-A-DALE

Come listen to me, you gallants so free,
All you that love mirth for to hear,¹
And I will tell you of a bold outlaw
That lived in Nottinghamshire.

As Robin Hood in the forest stood,
All under the greenwood tree,
There he was aware of² a brave young man
As fine as fine might be.

The youngster was clothed in scarlet red,
In scarlet fine and gay;
And he did frisk it³ over the plain,
And chanted a roundelay.

As Robin Hood next morning stood
Amongst the leaves so gay,
There did he espy the same young man,
Come drooping⁴ along the way.

The scarlet he wore the day before
It was clean cast away;
And at every step he fetched a sigh,
"Alack and a well-a-day!"⁵

¹ mirth for to hear — to hear merry tales.

² he was aware of — he noticed.

³ he did frisk it — he danced.

⁴ come drooping — coming with his head hanging.

⁵ Alack and a well-a-day! — Alas!

Then stepped forth brave Little John,
And Midge, the miller's son,
Which made the young man bend his bow,
When as he saw them come.

"Stand off, stand off!" the young man said,
"What is your will with me?"
"You must come before our master straight,
Under yon¹ greenwood tree."

And when he came bold Robin before,
Robin asked him courteously,
"O, hast thou² any money to spare
For my merry men and me?"

"I have no money," the young man said,
"But five shillings and a ring;
And that I have kept this seven long years,
To have it at my wed'ding.

"Yesterday I should have married a maid,
But she soon from me was tane,³
And chosen to be an old knight's delight,
Whereby my poor heart is slain."⁴

"What is thy name?" then said Robin Hood,
"Come tell me without any fail."
"By the faith of my body," then said the young man,
"My name it is Allan-a-Dale."

"What wilt thou give me?" said Robin Hood,
"In ready gold or fee,
To help thee to thy true love again,
And deliver her unto thee?"

"I have no money," then quoth⁵ the young man,
"No ready gold nor fee,
But I will swear upon a book
Thy true servant for to be."

¹ yon (archaic) — yonder — that, over there.

² hast thou (archaic) — have you.

³ tane — taken.

⁴ slain — dead.

⁵ quoth — said, spoke.

"How many miles is it to thy true love?
Come tell me without guile."
"By the faith of my body," then said the young man,
"It is but five little mile."

Then Robin he hasted¹ over the plain,
He did neither stint nor lin,²
Until he came unto the church,
Where Allan should keep his wed'ding.

"What hast thou here," the bishop then said,
"I prithee³ now tell unto me."
"I am a bold har'per," quoth Robin Hood,
"And the best in the north coun'try."

"O welcome, o welcome," the bishop he said,
"That music best pleaseth me;"
"You shall have no music," quoth Robin Hood,
"Till the bride and the bridegroom I see."

With that came in a wealthy knight,
Which was both grave and old,
And after him a bonnie lass,
Did shine like the glistering⁴ gold.

"This is not a fit match," quoth bold Robin Hood,
"That you do seem to make here,
For since we are come into the church,
The bride shall choose her own dear."

Then Robin Hood put his horn to his mouth,
And blew blasts two or three;
When four-and-twenty bowmen bold
Came leaping over the lea.

And when they came into the churchyard,
Marching all on a row,
The very first man was Allan-a-Dale,
To give bold Robin his bow.

"This is thy true love," Robin he said,
"Young Allan as I hear say;

¹ hasted — hastened, hurried.

² He did neither stint nor lin — He never stopped.

³ I prithee — I pray thee.

⁴ glistering — glistening.

And you shall be married at this same time,
Before we depart away."

"That shall not be," the bishop he said,
"For thy word shall not stand;¹
They shall be three times asked in the church,
As the law is of our land."

Robin Hood pulled off the bishop's coat,
And put it upon Little John;
"By the faith of my body," then Robin said,
"This cloth doth make thee a man."

When Little John went into the quire,²
The people began to laugh;
He asked them seven times in the church,
Lest three times should not be enough.

"Who gives me this maid?" said Little John;
Quoth Robin Hood, "That do I,
And he that takes her from Allan-a-Dale
Full dearly he shall her buy."³

And thus having end of this merry wed'ding,
The bride looked like a queen;
And so they returned to the merry greenwood,
Amongst the leaves so green.

MAXIM GORKY ON THE BALLADS OF ROBIN HOOD

Our famous writer Maxim Gorky greatly admired folklore. He was particularly fond of the Robin Hood ballads and when they appeared in Russian he wrote a preface to the translation. Gorky explains to the reader how it came about, in former times, that outlaws and robbers were so often idealized by the common people in all countries. 1) He says that when a people live under the foot of a higher class or under foreign masters with their cruel laws, they never benefit by their toil, and cannot get rid of the exploiters. Such a people look up to the outlaw as to a hero: he, the outlaw, does not fear men

¹ thy word shall not stand — what you have said can't be done.

² quire — choir.

³ Full dearly he shall her buy. — He shall pay for it dearly.

of power and despises their laws. It is he, the outlaw, who eventually breaks all those cruel laws and brings justice and freedom to everyone. And the people's wish is to live as the outlaws in the forest; their life is a bit wild, perhaps, but it is free. 2) The second reason for being fond of robbers and outlaws, Gorky thought, was the poetical desire for beauty, which is natural to any people. And who does not know that the common people always see kindness as part of poetical beauty, and freedom as part of justice? A life of hardships offers neither kindness nor beauty. The people long for them. So they endow the outlaw with the best human qualities: Robin Hood is brave in fighting, loyal in friendship, jolly, witty and always fair to everyone. He is generous and kind to the poor.

Today it is not important to prove whether Robin Hood really possessed those qualities. What is important, is to see in the image of Robin the soul of the common people themselves.

Up to the 19th century there was a celebration in the month of May in some parts of England, called Robin Hood Day. The people's favourite hero was commemorated by competitions in archery, by the singing of ballads, and by dancing.

Exercises

Questions:

1. How many original Robin Hood ballads are there in English literature and when were they written down?
2. Where and when did Robin Hood live? Describe him as a character.
3. What were the merry men of Robin Hood? Who were his close friends?
4. What is the chief idea expressed in the Robin Hood ballads?

Compositions:

1. Trace the following in any of the Robin Hood ballads you have read:
 - a) In what environment does the story told in the ballad take place?
 - b) To what classes of society do the characters in the ballad belong?
 - c) What is the conflict in the plot of the ballad?
 - d) Who are the heroes and who are the villains in the ballad?
 - e) Who wins?
2. Make up a story in prose based on any ballad you like.

Review Questions

I.

1. What is an epic poem? What themes do epic poems cover?
2. Who composed the great epics?
3. Where do the events related in the poem "Beowulf" take place? When was it first written down?
4. Describe the character of Beowulf.
5. What does the fight of Beowulf against the monsters symbolize?
6. What is the chief merit of the poem "Beowulf"?

II.

1. What do you know about the influence of the Catholic Church on culture during the Middle Ages?
2. Who were the writers and poets of the early Middle Ages, and what did they write?
3. What was the role of Alfred the Great in enlightening the people?
4. What did the literature of the early Middle Ages teach?

III.

1. What were the historical events and conditions which contributed to the formation of one single national language in England during the 14th century?
2. What were Chaucer's three creative periods? Comment on them.
3. What idea strikes you most in the prologue to the "Canterbury Tales"?
4. Which of Chaucer's characters represent the old feudal society in the work, and which the new class, the bourgeoisie?
5. What class of society stood up against the feudal ideals of the Middle Ages? Illustrate your answer by examples from Chaucer's work.
6. Which personages does Chaucer sympathize with, and which does he satirize in his work?
7. Why is Chaucer called the first classic of English national literature and the father of English poetry?

IV.

1. Why did the writing of poetry decline in the 15th century?
2. What kind of poetry did the common people compose in Britain?
3. What is the difference between a song and a ballad?
4. What kind of songs and ballads were found in the 15th century?
5. What do you know about the most popular ballads? Where does the chief interest lie in the adventures connected with Robin Hood?
6. In what respect are folk-songs and ballads important as a contribution to history?
7. What did Maxim Gorky say about the Robin Hood ballads?

"Nature, that framed us of four elements
Warring within each breast for regiment,
Doth teach us all to have aspiring minds;
Our souls, whose faculties can comprehend
The wondrous architecture of the world
And measure every planet's wandering course,
Still climbing after knowledge infinite,
And always moving as the restless spheres,
Will us to wear ourselves and never rest
Until we reach the sweetest fruit of all..."

CHRISTOPHER MARLOWE



II. The Renaissance

Historical Background. The Renaissance, or the Revival of Learning, which is another English term for it, was the period when European culture was at its height, a period unsurpassed by any other before or after it. The coming of this great and glorious epoch, which lasted from the 14th century till the 17th, was caused by complex economic and social conditions.

At that time the feudal system was being shattered by the bourgeoisie, which was getting stronger and stronger. The old social order didn't answer the demands of the new class that was rapidly gaining strength. The boundaries of different duchies and counties hindered the development of trade. It was more profitable for merchants to be united under a single ruler. In opposition to feudal discord, absolute monarchy came into being, and feudal domains, once almost independent, came under one-man power. This led to the forming of nations in the true sense of the word, and, as a natural consequence, to the creation of national languages. The first stage in the appearance of the bourgeoisie on the historical arena is called the period of the primary accumulation of capital.

What were the means by which this accumulation was effected? 1) Loans, for which stock exchanges and banking-houses were organized; 2) the expansion of markets by travelling to distant lands and seizing colonies; 3) driving the peasantry off their land, as a result of which the necessary workmen for the new manufacturing-houses were provided and raw materials produced.

New social and economic conditions called for a new ideology, because the Catholic dogmas did not correspond to the new trend of life. For that reason in many European countries different varieties of the Protestant religion sprang up and national Churches were established. Contrary to medieval concepts, according to which man was but an insignificant grain of sand whose every move was ordered by the will of God, the new ideology proclaimed the value of human

individuality, the value of individual initiative and enterprise, the value of man as such, whatever his birth and social standing. Instead of the blind faith ordered by the Catholic religion, great importance was assigned to intellect, to experience, to scientific experiment. This new outlook was called **Humanism**. It could not accept the old theological views, and took the art and science of ancient Greece and Rome for its basis, hence the term "the Revival of Learning". When in 1453 the Turks captured Constantinople and the Empire of Byzantium ceased to exist, a number of Byzantine scholars fled to Europe and began teaching the Greek language and literature, which up to that time was unknown there. The time demanded positive, rational knowledge, and the demand was supplied in astronomy, by Copernicus; in medicine, by Vesalius and Servetus;¹ in philosophy, by More, Montaigne and Bacon; in philology, by Desiderius Erasmus of Rotterdam — to name but a few. Great geographical discoveries were made by Columbus, Vasco da Gama, Fernando Magellan and many others. Leonardo da Vinci put forth a new theory and practice of art.

A definitive characteristic of the period was made by Frederick Engels in the introduction to his masterpiece "Dialectics of Nature", where he says of "that mighty epoch": "Royalty, with the support of the burghers of the towns, broke the power of the feudal nobility and established the great monarchies, based essentially on nationality, within which the modern European nations and modern bourgeois society came to development; and while the burghers and nobles were still grappling with one another, the peasant war in Germany pointed prophetically to future class struggles, by bringing on to the stage not only the peasants in revolt — that was no longer anything new — but, behind them, the beginnings of the modern proletariat, with the red flag in their hands and the demand for common ownership of property on their lips. In the manuscripts saved from the fall of Byzantium, in the antique statues dug out of the ruins of Rome, a new world was revealed to the astonished West, that of ancient Greece; the ghosts of the Middle Ages vanished before its shining forms; Italy rose to an undreamt-of flowering of art, which seemed like a reflection of classical antiquity and was never attained again. In Italy, France and Germany a new literature arose, the first modern literature; shortly afterwards came the classical epochs of English and Spanish literature. The bounds of the old *orbis terrarum*² were pierced; only now was the world really discovered and the basis laid for subsequent world trade and the transition of handicraft to manufacture,

¹ Look up the *Index of Names*, p. 236, for names of persons and places.

² Latin term for the planet Earth. Its exact Russian equivalent is земной шар. — V. R.

which in its turn formed the starting-point for modern large-scale industry. The spiritual dictatorship of the Church was shattered; it was directly cast off by the majority of the Germanic peoples, who adopted Protestantism, while among the Latins a cheerful spirit of free thought, taken over from the Arabs and nourished by the newly-discovered Greek philosophy, took root more and more and prepared the way for the materialism of the eighteenth century.

"It was the greatest progressive revolution that mankind had so far experienced, a time which called for giants and produced giants — giants in power and thought, passion and character, in universality and learning. The men who founded the modern rule of the bourgeoisie had anything but bourgeois limitations. On the contrary, the adventurous character of the time imbued them to a greater or less degree. There was hardly any man of importance then living who had not travelled extensively, who did not command four or five languages, who did not shine in a number of fields. [...] For the heroes of that time had not yet come under the servitude of the division of labour, the restricting effects of which, with their production of onesidedness, we so often notice in their successors. But what is especially characteristic of them is that they almost all pursue their lives and activities in the midst of the contemporary movements, in the practical struggle; they take sides and join in the fight, one by speaking and writing, another with the sword, many with both. Hence the fullness and force of character that makes them complete men."¹

An example of a typical man of the Renaissance period was the famous Englishman, Sir Walter Raleigh.



Sir Walter Raleigh (1552?—1618).

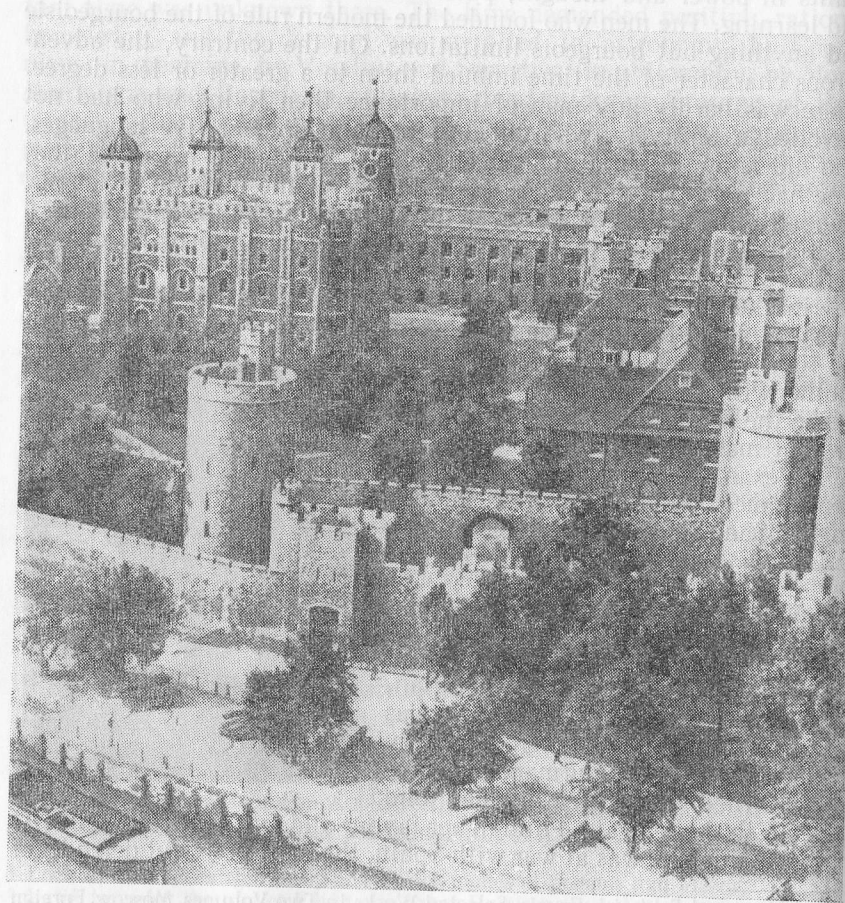
Statesman, courtier, soldier, sailor, explorer, pirate, colonizer, historian, philosopher, poet, Walter Raleigh was born in Devonshire and entered military service when a very young man. His brave deeds earned him great fame, and

Queen Elizabeth I raised him in her favour and made him a knight. At that time England was at war with Spain, the most powerful defender of

¹ Karl Marx and Frederick Engels. Selected Works in Two Volumes. Moscow, Foreign Languages Publishing House, 1958, vol. II, pp. 62—64.

Catholic reaction in Europe. Sir Walter fought the Spaniards at sea. He founded the colony of Virginia in North America, where, unlike his successors, he tried to establish friendly relations with the Indians. It was he who brought potatoes and tobacco to Europe.

After the death of Queen Elizabeth, King James I made peace with Spain, and in order to please the former enemies of England, he imprisoned Sir Walter. Raleigh was accused of plotting against the king and sentenced to death. He spent thirteen years in the Tower



The Tower of London.

of London, expecting execution every day. While in prison he planned to write a "History of the World", but only one volume of this vast project was completed. Besides that he wrote works on geography and on ship-building and some beautiful poems. In 1616 Raleigh was allowed to lead an expedition to South America to bring back gold and jewels. The expedition was a failure; on the way back Raleigh fought a sea-battle against some Spaniards and returned to face the protest of Spain, as a result of which he was rearrested and beheaded by King James's orders.

Raleigh was much interested in science and literature. He organized an "academy", a circle in which atheistic views were discussed. Its members included Sir Walter's friends: Thomas Harriot [ˈhæriət] (1560—1621), the most distinguished English mathematician and astronomer before Newton; Christopher Marlowe [ˈmɑ:lou], the greatest English dramatist before Shakespeare; Edmund Spenser, the foremost poet of the time (whom Raleigh helped to attain fame), and Ben Jonson, the most influential playwright and poet of his period (who for several years was the tutor of Raleigh's son).

Sir Walter Raleigh was an outstanding poet himself. Much of his poetry is lost, and we know only about thirty poems written by him. They are full of profound wisdom, written with great elegance and simplicity of style, and are remarkably expressive. His best poem is "The Lie", or "The Soul's Errand", said to have been composed in prison; in it he denounced the cruelty, hypocrisy and social inequality of his time. Even if he had written nothing else, this poem alone would be sufficient for us to consider him a major poet.

Some of his poems and his prose work "The Discovery of the Empire of Guiana" (1596) have been translated into Russian.

THE RENAISSANCE IN ENGLAND: FIRST PERIOD

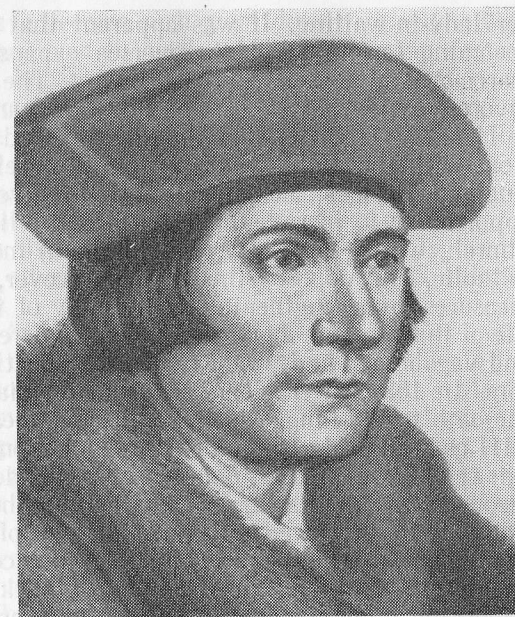
When King Richard III, the last of the Plantagenets [plænˈtædʒɪnz], was killed during the battle of Bosworth in 1485 (the battle which ended the Wars of the Roses), it marked the end of feudalism in England. The new dynasty, the Tudors, in the person of its first king, Henry VII, established absolute monarchy, which gave the bourgeoisie more freedom for commercial enterprises. This policy was continued by his son, Henry VIII, who was the first patron of the humanists in England. During his reign music and poetry flourished at his court (indeed, he composed music and poetry himself); foreign scholars, artists, and musicians came to England. Among them were

the great scholar, Erasmus of Rotterdam (1466?—1536) and the great German painter Hans Holbein the Younger (1497—1543). Music was represented by Italians and Frenchmen. With literature the case was different, many of the ideas of the Renaissance (the “New Learning”) being popularized by English poets and dramatists. The most important of these writers was the great Englishman and one of the greatest men of the period, the humanist Sir Thomas More.

Sir Thomas

More

(1478—1535)



His Life and Work

Thomas More was born in London and studied at Oxford, after which, like his father and grandfather before him, he became a lawyer and later, a judge. Very soon he acquired the reputation of being strict, but just and incorruptible, a brilliant Latin scholar and the wittiest man of his time. He became a member of Parliament in 1504, and very soon brought upon himself the displeasure of Henry VII after persuading the members of Parliament not to vote to the king the huge sum of money he demanded. After the crowning of Henry VIII he came into great favour and made a rapid career as a statesman, at the same time writing works of a political, philosophical and historical character, and also Latin verse. During a diplomatic mission to Flanders he began writing “Utopia”, which was printed in Louvain [l’uvern] (Belgium) in 1516 under the supervision of his close friend Erasmus. (The famous satire by Erasmus, “Praise to Folly”, was dedicated to More.) In 1529 More was made Lord Chancellor of England (highest judge to the House of Lords).

By that time Henry VIII decided to divorce his first wife, the Spanish princess Katherine of Aragon, and marry Anne Boleyn [l’bulin],

her lady-in-waiting. It was apparent that England and Spain were becoming serious rivals in oversea expansion, and the king's first marriage had lost its political sense. The Catholic religion forbids divorce, which only the Pope of Rome can grant, but he refused it to Henry VIII. After that the king decided to put an end to all relations with the Pope and proclaim himself head of the Church of England. Besides, such an action would give Henry VIII an admirable opportunity to increase his wealth by confiscating the estates of the Church, which, probably, was his main motive. More was a devout Catholic, and opposed this plan. Moreover, he understood that such measures, by strengthening the tyranny of the king, would make the life of the peasants much worse, would increase the number of paupers and vagabonds, and would enrich the courtiers and financial speculators. In 1532, after Henry's second marriage, More refused to take the oath to the king, which would have meant his recognizing Henry VIII as head of the Church of England. From the official point of view this refusal was treason, and More was condemned to death. Efforts to reconcile him with Henry VIII failed, and he was beheaded. Mounting the scaffold on Tower Hill, he said to an officer: "I pray you, Master Lieutenant, see me safe up, and for my coming down I shall shift for myself." As he put his head on the block he moved his beard aside remarking that his beard had done the king no offence.

"UTOPIA"

The word "Utopia" is formed of Greek words meaning "no place", "nowhere". The work, written in Latin, is divided into two books.

Book I contains a conversation between More himself, the Flemish humanist Petrus Aegidius, and a veteran sailor Raphael Hythloday [ˈræfərəl ˈhɪθlədɪ], formerly a travelling companion of the famous Amerigo Vespucci [æməˈri:gou vesˈputʃɪ]. The conversation deals with social and economic conditions in Europe and in England. Hythloday (this name, which is Greek for "a teller of lies", More gave him, obviously, to avoid being accused of excessive free-thinking) attacks all that was typical of contemporary English life: the parasitism of the nobility, the uselessness of the clergy, the vices of the monarchy itself. At that time common land was being enclosed; the peasants were being driven off their lands and brought to poverty; the fields were being turned into pastures for sheep. The increase in the production of wool was profitable to the merchants, because the famous English wool was the chief article of export at that period. This gave More an opportunity to put the following words into Hythloday's mouth: "Your sheep, that were so meek and tame, and so small eaters,

now, as I hear it said, have become such great devourers and so wild, that they swallow the very men themselves. They consume, destroy, and devour whole fields, houses and cities."¹ And Hythloday comes to a most important conclusion: a society based on private property cannot manage its affairs justly and successfully, justice and welfare may be achieved only by complete abolition of private property.

After that More (also, obviously, to safeguard himself from persecution) puts into his own mouth a speech in defence of private property. Hythloday retorts that More holds that opinion only because he cannot imagine any other way of life, whereas he, Hythloday, had visited an island...

Book II is dedicated to Hythloday's description of the island of Utopia, which he visited during one of his journeys. It is a state that has achieved absolute social and economic harmony by replacing private property by common property. In this happy country all are contented with simple necessities and are employed in useful labour. Since the wants are few and everyone must labour, no one need work more than six hours a day, and the rest of the time may be devoted to education and recreation. Utopia knows no money: there is no need of it there. Everything is paid for by toil for the general welfare. Gold is considered to be something indecent: chamber pots are made of it. Neither laziness nor greed are known. No post in Utopia is hereditary, every official is elected. In Utopia war is never waged but for some gross injury done to the Utopians or their allies; and the glory of a general is in proportion, not to the number, but to the fewness of the enemies he slays in gaining a victory. Criminals are punished by slavery, not by death, even for the greatest misdeeds. It is one of the oldest laws of the Utopians, that no man can be punished for his religion. Every man may try to convert others to his views by force of amicable and modest argument, without bitterness against those of other opinions; but whoever adds reproach and violence to persuasion is to be condemned to banishment or slavery. It may seem strange to us that More put slaves in his ideal system, but they are either condemned convicts or prisoners of war who refused to surrender and were captured by force. Slaves belong to the state, slavery is not hereditary, and every slave may become free if he works honestly.

Thomas More was the first writer in Europe to formulate communist principles as a basis for society, and therefore he is considered one of the greatest thinkers mankind has ever known.

¹ The words are taken from the English translation of "Utopia" made by Ralph Robinson in 1551 and given in modern spelling.



Plan of the island of Utopia from More's "Utopia", 1518.

On the suggestion of V. I. Lenin an obelisk was erected by the Kremlin wall in 1920. On that obelisk are engraved the names of thinkers and revolutionaries, whom the leaders of the October Revolution considered their predecessors; among them is the name of Thomas More.

Sir Thomas Wyatt (1503—1542) and Henry Howard, Earl of Surrey (1517?—1547). The outstanding poets of the period were Sir Thomas Wyatt [ˈwaɪət] and Henry Howard [ˈhaʊəd], Earl of Surrey [ˈsʌri]. Both made important contributions to English poetry. Wyatt, courtier and diplomat, wrote some beautiful lyrics and songs, and is also remembered for introducing the sonnet into English verse.

The sonnet is a verse form which was very popular during the Renaissance. It was brought to perfection by the great Italian poet Francesco Petrarca (1304—1374) or Petrarch [ˈpetrək] (which is the English way of spelling his name). It is a poem of fourteen lines divided into two quatrains (4-line groups) and two tercets (3-line groups). The rhyming of the quatrains is *abba abba*; as you see, the rhymes in both quatrains are the same. The rhyming of the tercets, according to Petrarch, is either *cd eed*, *cde cde*, or *cdc dcd*. But the difficulty of composing sonnets is not only in the difficult form: in a classical sonnet a thought is put forth in the first quatrain, and another, contradicting it, in the second; they intersect in the first tercet, and a solution is reached in the second tercet, in the last line of the sonnet. If the author has enough skill, he makes the last word of the last line the most significant; this word is called the key of the sonnet. As you see, a good sonneteer (as writers of sonnets are called) must have skill not only in versifying, but in thinking! No wonder this intellectual poetic form was so wide-spread during the Renaissance. Among the foremost English masters of the sonnet during later centuries, we must mention John Milton, William Wordsworth,¹ John Keats (1795—1821), Dante Gabriel Rossetti (1828—1882), Algernon Charles Swinburne (1837—1909), and Oscar Wilde (1854—1900).

In his sonnets Wyatt modified the Petrarchan model, changing the rhyming of the tercets. His sonnet scheme is as follows: *abba abba cdd cee*.

Another form of the sonnet, purely English, was invented by Surrey. It consists of three quatrains and a couplet: *abab cdcd efef gg*. Shakespeare's sonnets were written after this pattern, and for this

¹ For Milton and Wordsworth see pages 130 and 191.

reason such sonnets are generally called Shakespearian. This is wrong, for the real creator of the form was Surrey.

Another great innovation of Surrey's is to be seen in his translation of two books of Virgil's "Aeneid": he rendered them into blank verse (unrhymed five-foot iambics). It is practically impossible to enumerate all the masterpieces of poetry and drama written in blank verse during the following centuries in England, and not only in England. For this alone the name of Surrey must never be forgotten.

The lives of both Wyatt and Surrey ended tragically: both were accused of high treason; Wyatt managed to get free, but soon after his release he died, because his health had been undermined by cruel torture. Surrey, a member of one of the noblest English families, famous for his brave deeds as a warrior, was beheaded before reaching the age of thirty.

THE RENAISSANCE IN ENGLAND: SECOND PERIOD THE PREDECESSORS OF SHAKESPEARE

The most brilliant period English literature ever knew was in the second half of the 16th and the beginning of the 17th century; it is usually but inaccurately called the Elizabethan age after Queen Elizabeth I who reigned from 1558 to 1603, but it must be remembered that many authors of that time, including Shakespeare and Ben Jonson, wrote their greatest works after her death.

England had become a great world power; the peak of the country's development was reached in 1588, when the Spanish Armada [ɑ'mədəl], an enormous fleet sent by King Philip II to conquer England, was defeated. England had established wide commercial contacts with all non-Catholic nations, including Russia (the ships that routed the Armada were built of timber bought in Russia), and rich trading companies had been organized.

The English people were now a great nation, and the English language, enriched and to a certain extent already standardized, was now, except for the spelling, not unlike Modern English. Chaucer, even in modern spelling can be read only with the help of a glossary; Wyatt and Surrey are rather hard to read for one who is not a specialist; but works of the Elizabethan age, especially those in verse, can still be read as living literature and enjoyed more than anything else written in English.

By that time the principles of Italian and French Renaissance poetry had been completely introduced among the writers. The English, conscious of having become a nation, felt a great interest in their

historical past. A result of this was the appearance of "Chronicles" (1587) by Raphael Holinshed and other authors; episodes from this work form the plots of many plays written during the next decades. Many famous poetical and prose works by ancient and contemporary authors were translated. Original prose works also appeared, but the chief medium of the age was verse — lyric, epic, and dramatic.

Now follows an introduction to some of the foremost poets of the period.

■
Sir Philip Sidney (1554—1586). Poet, scholar, courtier, soldier, he seemed to his contemporaries to embody all the traits of character and personality they admired. He came of a distinguished family. After studying in Oxford, he travelled on the Continent, where he met many important men of his time and witnessed such a crucial event as the massacre of St. Bartholomew's Day,¹ August 23, 1572. This undoubtedly strengthened his anti-Catholic views. On his return to England he lived the life of a courtier, serving occasionally on diplomatic missions and actively encouraging men of letters, the most prominent of whom was the young Edmund Spenser. He made friends with Giordano Bruno during the great astronomer's stay in England. In 1580 he caused the queen's displeasure by actively opposing her projected marriage to the Duke of Anjou [ɑn'zu:]; Sidney was sure that the queen's marriage to a Catholic would harm England; this led to his dismissal from court.

He retired to the estate of his sister, and there, at her request and for her amusement, wrote a pastoral romance in prose called "Arcadia" [ɑ'keɪdiə]. Its plot is very complicated (Shakespeare used an episode out of it for the story of Gloucester and his sons in "King Lear"), some parts of it are of political interest, and Sidney put more serious thought into it than he pretended when he described the book as mere entertainment. Many poems are included in the prose narrative, some of which



¹ St. Bartholomew's [snt bɑ:'θələmjuz] Day is remembered for the massacre of the French Protestants, the Huguenots ['hju:gənu:z], by order of the Queen of France, Catherine de Medici ['medɪtʃi], who was a Catholic.

rank among the best he ever wrote. Some critics consider "Arcadia" the most important original work of English prose fiction written before the 18th century. At about the same time Sidney wrote an outstanding theoretical work, "Apology for Poetry", in which he polemicized with the Puritans¹ who denied poetry (and all imaginative literature) the right to exist. Sidney proclaimed the great importance of poetry because of its power to teach and delight at the same time. Sidney's "Astrophel ['æstrəfel] and Stella" is the first of the great Elizabethan sonnet cycles; in it he employed the Petrarchan sonnet as modified by Wyatt.

Sidney died a hero. In 1586 he was in the Netherlands with an English expeditionary corps: the English were allies of the Dutch and helped them in their struggle against the Spanish invaders. In the battle Sidney was mortally wounded. Tormented by pain and thirst, he was putting an almost empty bottle to his lips when he saw a common soldier looking longingly at him; Sidney passed the bottle and said, "Thy necessity is greater than mine." Several days later he died, and all England mourned for him.

All the works of Sidney were published some years after his death — at the time it was "not quite the thing" for an author of noble birth to print his poems; it was enough to circulate them in manuscript among chosen friends. (The poems of Wyatt and Surrey were published only in 1557.) Yet Sidney was the author of the most important work of prose fiction of his age, of the most important piece of literary criticism, and of the most important sonnet cycle. His works, when published, had a great influence on all English literature of the time.



Edmund Spenser (1552—1599). There was another category of Renaissance poets, those who couldn't boast of noble birth: they came from poor families and had to depend on their poetical talent to make a living. Such a poet would usually dedi-

¹ The Puritans were the revolutionary wing of the Protestants in England during the 16th and 17th centuries. They belonged to the petty bourgeoisie and fought against the extravagance of the established church. This resulted in their attacks against literature and the stage.

cate a printed work to some nobleman in hope of a financial reward, which was not considered embarrassing at the time.

Among such was the greatest non-dramatic poet of the English Renaissance, Edmund Spenser, whose father was a cloth-maker. The future poet attended the Merchant Taylors' School and later had the luck to go to Cambridge as a "sizar".¹ He acquired some influential friends, and eventually became secretary to the powerful Earl of Leicester ['lestəl], one of Queen Elizabeth's favourites, which brought him into contact with Leicester's nephew, Sir Philip Sidney, to whom Spenser dedicated his "Shepherd's Calendar". This work consists of twelve eclogues, or dialogues, between shepherds (one for each month of the year). Though pretending to represent simple life, it is really a running commentary on contemporary affairs, and at times becomes didactic or satirical. Probably the most important of these is "October", which deals with the problem of poetry in contemporary life and the responsibility of the poet. The work is also interesting for the amazing variety of meter and stanza displayed in it.

In 1580 Spenser became secretary to Lord Grey, the cruel Lord Deputy of Ireland, and lived in that country, except for two brief visits to England, until shortly before his death. In Ireland he became the owner of an estate, where he lived in comparative obscurity. When Sir Walter Raleigh was in Ireland, he heard the first part of Spenser's major work, the allegorical poem "The Faerie Queene",² and was so impressed that he persuaded Spenser to go to London and supervise



The Redcross Knight, from "The Faerie Queene".

¹ "sizar ['saizə]" — a poor student who paid less for his education than others and who had to serve the richer students during meals.

² Archaic spelling of "The Fairy Queen".

its publication. In 1590 the first three books of the poem were printed with a dedication to Queen Elizabeth, for which Spenser received a pension from her. In 1594 Spenser married the lady whom he commemorated in his sonnet cycle "Amoretti". In 1598 the great Irish rebellion broke out, during which Spenser's castle was burnt. Shortly after this, Spenser, a poor and broken man, came to London with his wife and children, and soon died in a cheap lodging-house.

Spenser is sometimes called "the poet's poet" because so many later English poets learned the art of versification from his works. He is famous as an experimenter in verse forms, many of which became traditional in England. He created a sonnet form of his own, the *Spenserian sonnet*:

One day I wrote her name upon the strand beach
But came the waves and washéd¹ it away;
Again I wrote it with a second hand, for the second time
But came the tide, and made my pains his prey.
"Vain man," said she, "that dost in vain assay try
A mortal thing so to immortalize!
For I myself shall like to this decay, like this
And eke my name be wipéd out likewise." also; shall be said
"Not so (quoth I), let baser things devise
To die in dust, but you shall live by fame:
My verse your virtues rare shall 'eternize,
And in the heavens write your glorious name,
Where, 'whenas Death shall all the world subdue, when
Our love shall live, and later life renew."

("Amoretti" Sonnet LXXV.
Modernized spelling)

Spenser gave English verse a melodiousness and harmony unknown before him; compared to his poems, the works of, say, Wyatt or Surrey seem clumsy and even crude.

But Spenser was not only a "musician in poetry", but a "painter" as well. In his huge poem "The Faerie Queene" (only six books out of the planned twelve were completed), it is not the story about the adventures of the knights that attracts us, but the passages that describe nature, or picturesque allegorical scenes. Here, for example, is a procession of the seasons:

¹ washed ['wɔ:ʃɪd]. The mark over é means that -ed is to be read as a separate syllable.

So forth issued the seasons of the year:
First, lusty Spring, all dight in leaves of flowers dressed
That freshly budded and new blooms did bear
(In which a thousand birds had built their bowers, nests
That sweetly sung, to call forth paramours): mates
And in his hand a javelin he did bear, light spear
And on his head (as fit for warlike stoures) conflicts
A gilt engravéd morion he did wear; a kind of helmet
That, as some did him love, so others did him fear.

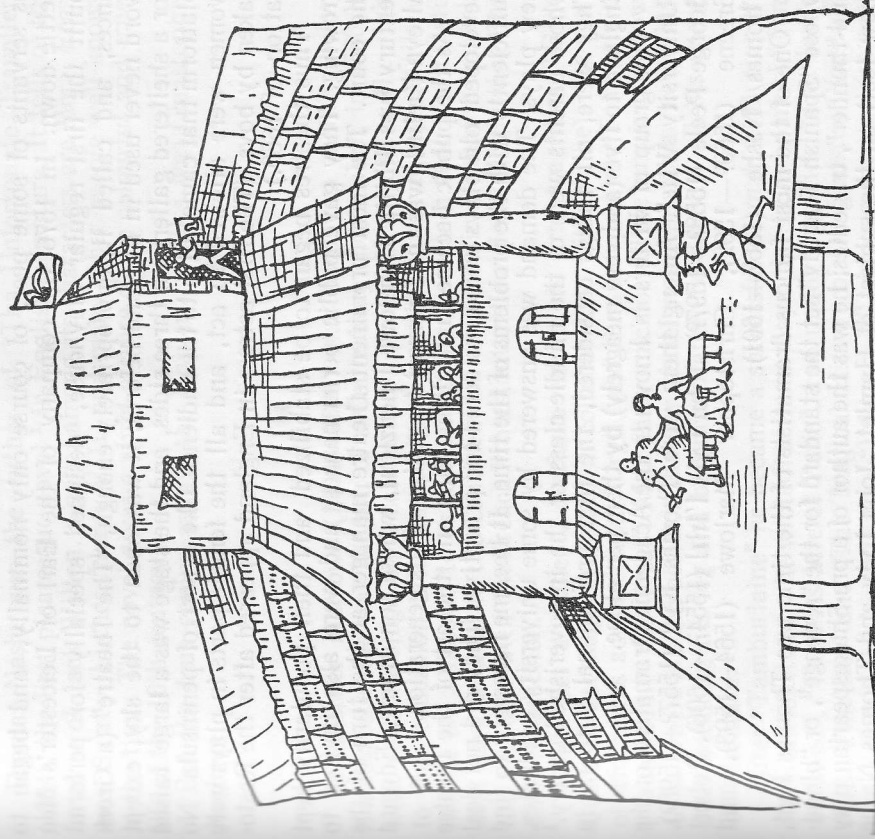
Then came the jolly Summer, being dight
In a thick silken cassock coloured green, a long robe
That was unlinéd all, to be more light:
And on his head a garland well beseen
He wore, from which, as he had chaufféd been, heated
The sweat did drop; and in his hand he bore
A bow and shafts, as he in forest green arrows
Had hunted late the leopard or the boar,
And now would bathe his limbs, with labour heated
sore. very much

Then came the Autumn, all in yellow clad,
As though he joyéd in his plenteous store, plentiful
Laden with fruits that made him laugh, full glad
That he had banished hunger, which to-fore before
Had by the belly oft him pinchéd sore.
Upon his head a wreath, that was enrolled
With ears of corn of every sort, he bore:
And in his hand a sickle he did hold,
To reap the ripened fruits the which the earth
had yold. yielded

Lastly came Winter, clothéd all in frieze, rough woollen cloth
Chattering his teeth for cold that did him chill,
Whil'st on his hoary beard his breath did freeze, snow-white
And the dull drops, that from his purpled bill mouth
As from a limbeck did adown distill. vessel; down
In his right hand a tippéd staff he held, stick
With which his feeble steps he stayéd still;
For he was faint with cold, and weak with eld; age
That scarce his looséd limbs he able was to wield. to use

("The Faerie Queene", Book VII,¹ Canto VII, Stanzas XVIII—XXI.
Modernized spelling)

¹ Book VII of "The Faerie Queene" was left unfinished.



The Swan Theatre (London), built by Francis Langley, where Shakespeare and his company played in 1596—1597.

By the middle of the 16th century there were companies of strolling actors who performed in town squares, inn-yards, and in the manors of the nobility. In 1572 Queen Elizabeth passed a decree against vagabonds; by this decree travelling actors were also to be considered as vagabonds and treated as such, that is, with the utmost barbarity. The only exception made was for those that were in the service of some nobleman. Many of these companies enlisted

Some of the rhymes in the extract are imperfect, in that they are rather visual (for the eye), than audial (for the ear). The reason is as follows. In medieval English the spelling and the pronunciation of the words, as a rule, coincided; later, when the language began to change, some words that were spelled alike began to be pronounced quite differently, but rhyming such words (for instance, "love" and "move") has remained a tradition in English versification.

The stanza of "The Faerie Queene" was constructed by Spenser and is called the Spenserian stanza after him. It is a nine-line stanza, the last line is in six-foot iambics, while the others are in five-foot iambics. Its rhyming scheme is *ababbcbcc*. Many other poets used it: Burns ("The Cotter's Saturday Night"), Byron ("Childe Harold's Pilgrimage"), Shelley ("The Revolt of Islam [ʼɪzlɑːml", "Adonais [ˌædəˈneɪsɪ]), Keats ("The Eve of St. Agnes [snt'æɡnɪs]", "The Cap and Bells").

THEATRE AND DRAMA

There were fine works of poetry and prose in the Elizabethan age, but the greatest heights of literature at that period were reached in drama.

The Middle Ages knew religious drama; the Mysteries, Miracles, and Moralities as they were called. The Mystery plays dramatized episodes from the Bible; the Miracle plays, episodes from the lives of saints. Morality plays were allegorical, and dedicated to the struggle of the various virtues and vices for the human soul; more often than not, the vices and even the devil himself were shown in such plays in a comic aspect. Between the episodes of these plays, comic scenes were usually acted that bore almost no relation to the story; these were called interludes.

There was another type of performance in English cities, the pageants [ʼpædʒəntsɪs]; these were pantomimes re-enacting episodes from the history of that particular city. These pageants were the source of the histories (historical plays) for which the English Renaissance drama is famous.

Sixteenth century England also knew a third type of performance: plays staged by university students; they were plays by Roman dramatists, Seneca [ˈsenɪkəl (tragedies) and Plautus [ˈplɔːtəs] and Terence [ˈterəns] (comedies), acted in Latin. Later on, original English plays written in imitation of these authors began to appear.

Such were the foundations of the glorious English drama of the Renaissance.

Thomas Nashe was the author of "The Unfortunate Traveller" (1594), the first picaresque novel¹ in English literature. It tells of the fortunes of Jack Wilton, a page; among its characters are More, Erasmus, Surrey, Luther, Henry VIII, and many other people well-known at the time. The novel gives a vivid picture of the colourful and cruel life of the 16th century.

But the true genius among the University Wits was Christopher Marlowe.

■

Christopher Marlowe (1564—1593) was born two months before Shakespeare. He was the son of a Canterbury shoe-maker; in 1580 he went to Cambridge on a scholarship. (A scholarship gave the right to free education after competitive examinations.) Many details of his life are unknown to us, but it is almost certain that in his student days he went to the Continent on a secret official mission to establish contacts with the French Protestants, the allies of England against Catholic reaction.

While yet a student, Marlowe wrote his first tragedies: "Dido, Queen of Carthage" (possibly in collaboration with Nashe), the story of which was adopted from Virgil, and the first part of "Tamburlaine l'tambolein"² the Great". After that, much of his life remains unknown to us. There is a supposition that for a brief period he was an actor, but, after breaking his leg and becoming lame, he devoted all his energy to literature.

After "Tamburlaine" he became a successful dramatist. During the six years left to him he wrote five more plays: the second part of "Tamburlaine", "The Massacre at Paris", two major tragedies: "The Jew of Malta l'mɔ:ltə]" and "The Tragical History of Dr. Faustus l'fɔ:stəs]", and a chronicle history play "Edward II". Among his non-dramatic works his translations of the Roman poets Ovid l'ɔ:vɪd] and Lucan l'lu:kən] must be mentioned; he had also begun a long poem "Hero and Leander", which was finished after his death by the poet and dramatist

¹ A genre, wide-spread in European literature from the 16th century, in which the rogue-hero tells about his adventures. (The word "picaresque" comes from the Spanish word "pícaro" — an adventurer, a rogue.) He is usually a poor man who tries, by hook or by crook, to gain a place in life. Picaresque novels depict the life of the time with broad realism and satire. They influenced the prose fiction of the Enlightenment.

² That is, Tamerlane l'tæməleɪn] (Timur, 1333—1405), ruler of Samarkand and conqueror of many countries.

as servants of some peer, of course only nominally, and began to settle down. In 1576 the company of the Earl of Leicester's Men built the first regular playhouse, designed specially for performances, and called it, appropriately enough, "The Theatre" (a Greek word never used in England before); it was open to the sky, except for a sheltered gallery on three sides, and the stage was a large raised platform that came out into the audience like a sort of peninsula. No women were allowed to act, and all the female parts in plays were taken by boys. (The first actress in England appeared after the Restoration of 1660.)

Thus theatres began to be stabilized, and their popularity kept growing. They gave public performances, and were also invited to the court. The most prominent theatre manager at the turn of the century was Philip Henslowe l'henzloul, whose son-in-law, Edward Alleyn l'ælɪn, was the foremost tragedian of his generation.

As the public became more demanding and the art of the theatre developed, old plays were considered too primitive. They did not deal sufficiently with the problems of the time. It became necessary to find new plays. The demand was answered by some university graduates, whose parents were of the middle-class or the impoverished gentry.¹ They were, all things considered, the first professional authors in England to live (and very meagrely) by their pen alone.

This group of writers is known as the Academic Dramatists or the "University Wits". Among them were Thomas Kyd (1557?—1595?), George Peele (1558?—1597?), John Lyly l'lyl (1554?—1606), Robert Greene (1560?—1592), Christopher Marlowe (1564—1593), and Thomas Nashe (1567—1601).

One of the most famous dramatists of the time was Thomas Kyd, whose "Spanish Tragedy" set the standard for the "revenge", or "blood-and-thunder", tragedies; he was the author of a pre-Shakespearean play (now lost) on the subject of Hamlet. John Lyly and Thomas Nashe were famous not for their dramatic works only. Lyly wrote the prose romance "Euphues l'ju:fju:zl, or the Anatomy of Wit" that was very popular at the time; the book gave birth to the term "euphuism" which means a very artificial, over-ornamented and mannered style of expression. This style was carried to the heights of absurdity by some of Lyly's imitators, but we must remember that he was one of the first authors to reflect the complex feelings of his contemporaries, and he found it necessary to use a complex, embellished style for that purpose.

¹ Land-owners of gentle birth, not possessing a title.

George Chapman (1559?—1634?), famous for his translations of Homer's poems.

Marlowe was also the author of a small poem, "The Passionate Shepherd to His Love", which is probably the most beautiful lyrical piece written during the English Renaissance.

The more Marlowe's fame grew, the less desirable to the queen and her advisors he became. He was a member of Sir Walter Raleigh's "academy", a centre of free-thinking. Later, Thomas Kyd gave information to the Privy Council¹ accusing Marlowe of atheism (a very serious crime at the period) and treason. On May 30, 1593, Marlowe was killed by a dagger thrust in a tavern brawl; obviously, his murder was ordered by the Privy Council.

Marlowe's literary activity lasted for but a few years, yet he created an immortal place for himself in English drama and poetry. If his contemporary, William Shakespeare, had died at the same age, he would scarcely be known today.

Among the great merits of Marlowe was his reform of dramatic verse. In 1561 the first English play written in blank verse was produced; that was "Gorboduc" [ˈɡɔːbəduːk], or Ferrex and Porrex, a tragedy by two scholarly nobles, Sir Thomas Norton and Thomas Sackville, Earl of Dorset. The verse of this play was dull, harsh and crude. It was Marlowe who gave wings to the meter: under his pen blank verse became grand, sonorous and capable of expressing emotion. The poetic imagery employed by Marlowe is monumental, highly coloured, and in perfect accord with the ideas of his tragedies. And what were the ideas?

As we already know, an outstanding feature of Renaissance ideology was the belief in man, himself the master and creator of his destiny. Marlowe's tragedies portray heroes who passionately seek power — the power of absolute rule (Tamburlaine), the power of money (Barabbas [bəˈræbəsl], the Jew of Malta), the power of knowledge (Faustus). Marlowe delights in the might and the strong will of his heroes. But there is another side to all these characters.

In the opinion of some men of the Renaissance, man was free not only from the binding dogmas of the Church, but from all moral and ethical obligations whatever; this was an outlook typical of the period, and Marlowe had insight enough to show not only the titanic energy and initiative of his heroes, but the inevitable inner crisis that they faced as well. His Tamburlaine, an obscure Scythian shepherd (which the historical Tamerlane was not), rises to the utmost height of power;

¹ the queen's private counsellors.

Barabbas collects a colossal fortune; Faustus, in order to achieve absolute knowledge and gain power over space and time, allies himself with the devil — eventually, all are defeated. In the plays of Marlowe we can see both his respect and admiration for the might of human individuality and his condemnation of individualism.¹

The plays of Marlowe had an enormous success, which Edward Alleyn, who played the parts of all his heroes, shared. But at the same period another actor, Richard Burbage [ˈbʊːbɪdʒ], became Alleyn's serious rival.

After some time the theatre where Burbage played stopped buying plays from the University Wits. The reason was that among Burbage's company there was a share-holder and a third-rate actor who turned out to be able to write plays himself. The verse of these plays was more pliant, and they contained better material for acting than the plays of the University Wits: their author was a professional actor, and knew much better what the theatre required. His name was William Shakespeare...

Shakespeare's Junior Contemporaries. Towards the end of the 16th century life in England underwent a great change. The primary accumulation of capital was practically accomplished, and it was time to put the capital into circulation. The Renaissance titans who "had anything but bourgeois limitations" (Engels) were needed no more, and many of them met a tragic end. Absolute monarchy, progressive up to a certain stage, from the later years of Elizabeth I and during the reign of James I, became an obstacle to social development. New trends of thought, hostile to Renaissance humanism, appeared, and humanism faced a crisis. As a result of this, the ideology of the drama began to undergo considerable changes. There appeared pessimistic and even morbid tragedies by John Webster (1580?—1625?) and John Ford (1586—1639?). Aristocratic views were reflected in the works of Francis Beaumont [ˈfrænsɪs ˈbəʊmənt] (1584—1616) and John Fletcher (1579—1625), who often collaborated in writing their plays. They gave birth to a new dramatic genre, the tragi-comedy, as it was called. It is not, as is usually supposed, a mixture of the tragic and the comic elements (there are comic scenes in many Elizabethan tragedies), but a play with a tragic conflict and a happy ending. The plays of Beaumont and Fletcher are always amusing, masterfully constructed, written in easy-flowing verse, and have very interesting and complicated plots, but they are superficial, even shallow.

¹ This view on Marlowe was first put forth by the Soviet scholar, A. T. Parfyonov.

(1610), in which he ridicules many superstitions of his time, and Bartholomew [bɑː'θələmjʊː] Fair" (1614), a wide satirical survey of all contemporary classes of society.

From 1605 Ben Jonson started writing what were called masques, that is, plays to be presented at court and acted mainly by the nobility and sometimes even by royalty; these were elaborate and very expensive spectacles, involving music, song, and dance, built around a moral allegory and culminating in a compliment to the king and queen. In 1616 Ben Jonson was made poet laureate and granted a pension, but, nevertheless, he died in poverty, stricken by paralysis. His last play, left unfinished, is unlike any other written by him: it is a pastoral drama, "The Sad Shepherd", with Robin Hood and his merry men among the characters; it is written in most exquisite verse.

The ideology of Jonson was complex: loathing the decaying feudal aristocracy, he was in his social views very close to Puritan Republicanism,¹ but at the same time he hated the Puritans because they considered the theatre to be sinful. Jonson was convinced that the theatre was a mighty weapon in the moral improvement of mankind, and attached great importance to it. His hostility to tyrants and political adventurers was expressed in his tragedies of "Sejanus" (aɪ'dʒeɪnəs] His 2 Fall" (1603) and "Catiline [ˈkætələn] His 2 Conspiracy" (1611), based on Roman history.

Ben Jonson was also a fine lyric poet. His minor poems and the songs in many of his plays are true masterpieces. Many English poets have written poems dedicated to Shakespeare, but the poem by Ben Jonson, composed to the memory of his colleague and friend, remains unsurpassed.

But it was in the genre of satirical comedies that Ben Jonson became leader and excelled all other dramatists. The comedies were written after the "theory of humours". It was believed that a certain inclination or passion in the character of every individual was due to certain "humours" of the constitution, or "liquids" flowing in the body of man. Jonson slightly exaggerated these "humours". It made his characters grotesque and sometimes one-sided, but it also made him the forerunner of the classicist movement in literature.

Jonson's grotesquely comic manner of depicting characters typical of contemporary life influenced the whole of English literature.

¹ Some of the more advanced Puritans held republican views; their aim was the establishment of a republican government instead of a monarchy.

² An Archaic grammatical form, out of which the modern Possessive Case developed. (We would say: "Sejanus's Fall" and "Catiline's Conspiracy".)



Ben Jonson (1573—1637). We know that Shakespeare was the greatest of English authors and that he had an enormous influence on the whole of world literature. But Ben Jonson had greater direct influence on English literature than Shakespeare himself ever had.

Ben Jonson was born in Westminster. His father, a clergyman, died shortly before the birth of his son. Adopted in early childhood by a bricklayer, Ben was educated at Westminster School, where his teacher was William Camden (1551—1623), the great historian and antiquarian. This was the beginning of Jonson's education: he learned a great deal from Camden, and picked up much more of his splendid

erudition by his own efforts; for though later he had the reputation of being the most learned man of his time and received honorary degrees from both Oxford and Cambridge, he never attended any university. After leaving Westminster School, he worked as a bricklayer for some time, and then entered the army and fought the Spaniards in Flanders, proving himself to be a man of extraordinary courage. Returning to England about 1595, he began to work as an actor and playwright, and very soon became a dramatist of the first rank. A man of fiery temper, he was jailed for killing a fellow-actor in a duel, and again jailed for being collaborator in a play that insulted the Scots at the time King James succeeded Elizabeth on the throne of England. Jonson was always in the thick of literary battles with his fellow-dramatists and as he grew older, he became literary dictator of London and gained the friendship of men like Shakespeare and the great philosopher Francis Bacon (1561—1626). He was the literary teacher of many young poets, whom he called "his sons"; among them was John Milton.

If Shakespeare is unsurpassed in the genres of historical chronicle and tragedy, Jonson is the author of the best English satirical comedies. Among his best works are "Volpone, or the Fox" (1606), with the action set in Venice [*l'venis*], a devastating satire on the lust for riches; "The Silent Woman" (1609), one of the funniest comedies ever written with probably the most unexpected ending in all drama; "The Alchemist"

William Shakespeare

1564—1616)

"The applause! delight! the wonder of our stage!

.....
Thou art a monument without a tomb,

And art alive still while thy book doth live,

And we have wits to read and praise to give.

.....
He was not of an age, but for all time!"

BEN JONSON

The English Renaissance gave birth to an amazing galaxy of great writers, but William Shakespeare outshines them all. He had a greater influence on the development of the whole of world literature than any other author. Characters created by him remain perfect depictions of the principal human passions and psychological traits.

But Shakespeare was not just a painter of abstract passions independent of space and time, as many bourgeois scholars try to show him. His unsurpassed portrayals of human nature come as a result of his profound insight into the most important social and philosophical problems of the period. With due apologies to the great Ben Jonson, we may say that Shakespeare was "for all time" because he was very much "of an age", of his own age!

The age knew many brilliant men; Shakespeare was a marvellous poet, but not the only one; a great dramatist, but not the only one; he was a learned man, but many of his contemporaries surpassed him in learning.

What, then, makes him the greatest of the great?

In the first place, a harmonious combination of all these qualities; in the second place, their being united in a truly colossal intellect, capable of penetrating into the very core of things. A great poet, an unsurpassed dramatist, an unrivalled psychologist, he was also a philosopher of the first magnitude.

It is utterly impossible to characterize every aspect of his genius in a brief chapter. We shall try to point out only the most outstanding.

Among his followers we may list the novelists of the Enlightenment, and such writers of later periods as Charles Dickens, G. Bernard Shaw, and J. B. Priestley.

Exercises

Questions:

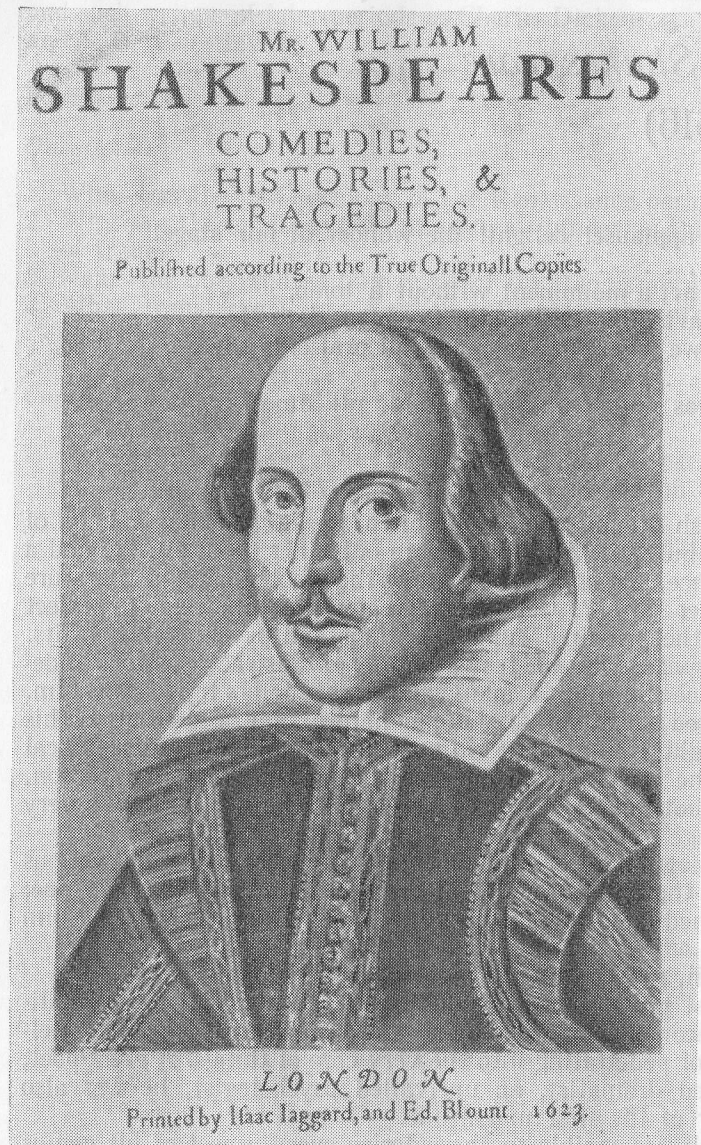
1. What was the new ideology of the Renaissance period?
2. Why was the feudal system an obstacle hindering the development of trade?
3. Name the outstanding humanists of the Renaissance.
4. What translations into English influenced the literature of the period?

Compositions:

1. Describe a character typical of the Renaissance period. (Raleigh, Wyatt, Surrey, Sidney, Spenser or any other person you have read about.)
2. Tell the story of Sir Thomas More. Give an account of "Utopia".

Tasks:

1. Speak about the role of foreign scholars in England during the first period of the Renaissance.
2. a) Speak about the forms of English verse that you know. What were the contributions to English poetry made in the first period of the Renaissance?
b) Explain what a sonnet is. Show the difference between the Italian and the English sonnet.
c) What was new in the Spenserian stanza? Arrange the rhymes in Spenser's stanzas given in this book according to his rhyming scheme: *ababbcbcc*.
3. Give an account of the London theatres of the time.
4. Who was Christopher Marlowe and what was his literary work?
5. Name any other of the University Wits you remember.
6. Speak about the greatness of Ben Jonson and his influence on the development of English literature.



Title-page of the First Folio, 1623.

The Life of Shakespeare

Many periods in Shakespeare's life remain obscure to us. Subject-matter for his biography began to be collected only about a hundred years after his death, and many of the facts gathered are very doubtful. There is nothing surprising in that, because in the time of Shakespeare the work of a public theatre playwright was considered the least respectable of all literary arts and no one paid much attention to dramatists' lives. However, the life of Shakespeare is better known to us than the life of any other dramatist of his time, with the exception of Ben Jonson; of some of his other colleagues we have practically no data at all. Our short survey of Shakespeare's life is founded only on authentic (trustworthy) sources.

William Shakespeare was born in 1564, in the town of Stratford-on-Avon. He was christened in Holy Trinity ['trɪnɪtɪ] Church in Stratford on April 26. As it was customary to christen children on the third day after birth, we may suppose that he was born on April 23. His father, John Shakespeare, was a prominent citizen who became an alderman.¹ In 1570 a serious rebellion broke out in the north of England: the powerful feudal families of Percy and Neville rose in revolt against Queen Elizabeth. Shakespeare would have seen government troops marching north, and, since his father was an alderman whose duty it was to organize militia,² the boy was in the very centre of events. For months, the talk of his elders must have been of rebels, armies, bloodshed and the threat to stability. No doubt these events produced a great impression on the future poet.

In his childhood Shakespeare probably attended the Stratford Grammar School, where he could have acquired a considerable knowledge of Latin. Later he satirized the school education of his time in his comedies "Love's Labour's Lost" and "The Merry Wives of Windsor".

The first record we have of his life after his christening is that of his marriage to Anne Hathaway ['hæθəweɪ] in 1582. A daughter was born to them in 1583 and twins, a boy and a girl, in 1585. By that time John Shakespeare had been ruined and was quite poor.

After the birth of the twins we know absolutely nothing about Shakespeare's life for the next seven years. Scholars have put forth various theories concerning that period, some are very interesting and clever, but none of them can be either proved or disproved. We know for certain that in 1592 Robert Greene published a pamphlet in which

¹ a member of a city council.

² ['mɪ'lɪʃə] — force of civilians trained as soldiers but not part of the regular army.

Hamlet". By 1597 he had prospered to such a degree that he bought the largest house in Stratford.

The first (and very complimentary) mention of Shakespeare as dramatist was made by the writer Francis Meres [transl. 'mæz] in 1598; Meres drew up a list of Shakespeare's plays, and also made mention of his sonnets, some of which were probably written at an earlier date. The sonnets appeared in a separate edition only in 1609, when the fashion for sonnets was on the decline, and the book didn't attract much attention.

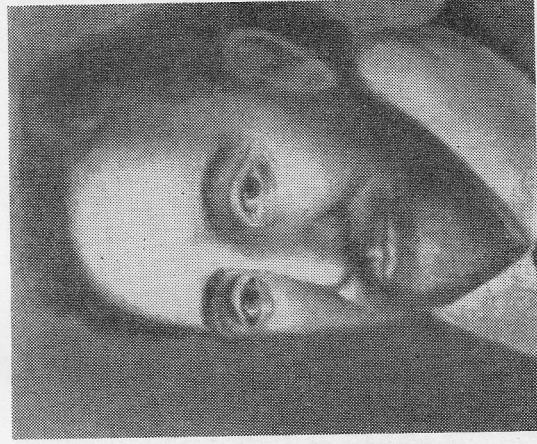
In 1601 the Earl of Essex, fallen into great disfavour with the queen, attempted to raise an armed revolt against her.

Among his allies were Southampton and many of his friends. On the day of their uprising they ordered Shakespeare's historical play "Richard II" to be performed at the Globe for propaganda purposes: they hoped that showing the dethronement of an unworthy king would arouse the people to follow them. The revolt turned out a complete failure; Essex was beheaded, Southampton and others imprisoned. We may suppose that Burbage and Shakespeare had a very narrow escape.

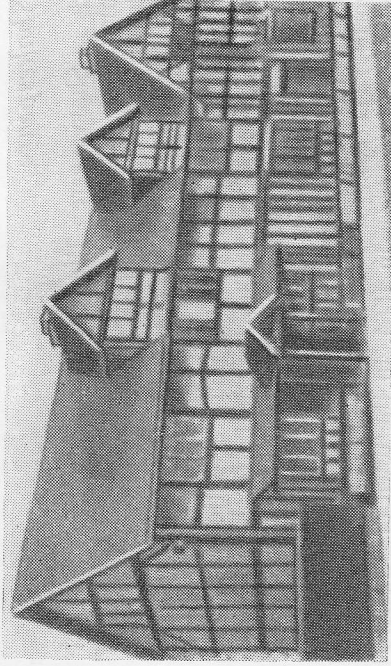
This was also the time when Shakespeare's great tragedies began to appear.

During the last years of his life Shakespeare wrote less and less; he tried composing in a new manner, originated by Beaumont and Fletcher and very fashionable at the time. In 1613, after the Globe had been destroyed by fire during a performance of "Henry VIII", he retired to Stratford and seems to have stopped writing altogether. We may suppose that by then he was a very ill man. On April 23, 1616, he died and was buried in the same Holy Trinity Church in Stratford where he was christened.

In 1623, two of Shakespeare's fellow-actors, John Heminge and Henry Condell, collected and published all his plays in a single volume,



Richard Burbage, who played Shakespeare's heroes. Possibly a self-portrait.

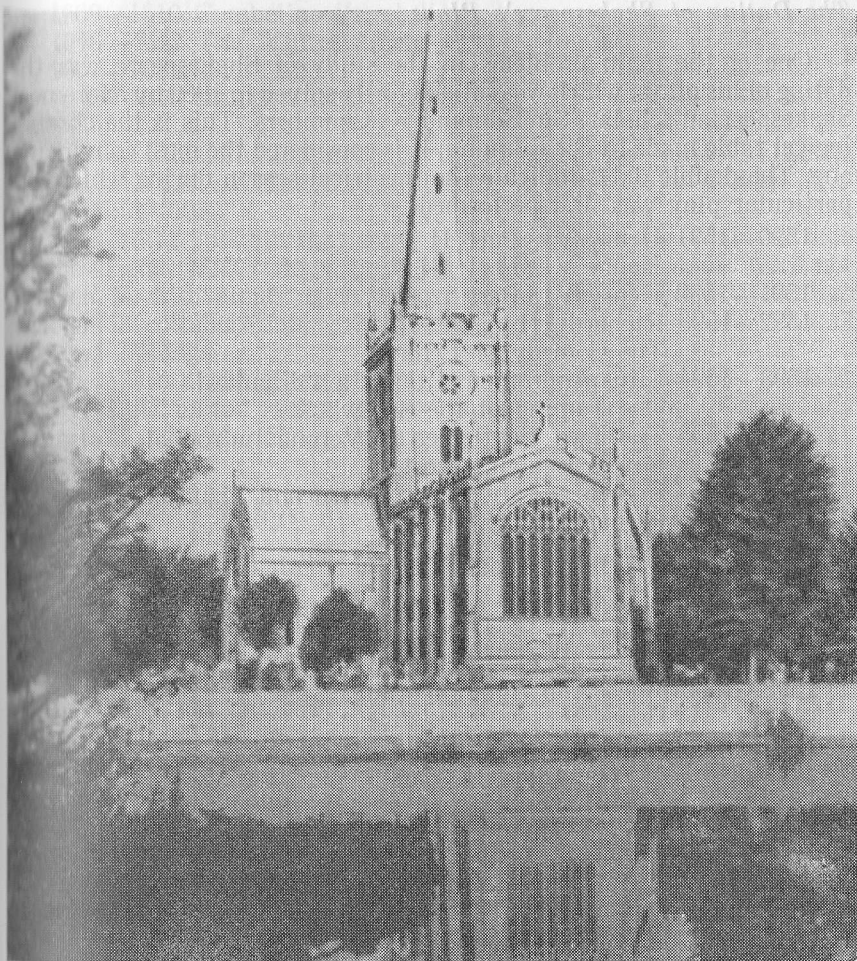


Shakespeare's birthplace as it looks today.

he made some insulting remarks about Shakespeare, from which we may conclude that by that year Shakespeare had arrived in London and had not only become a dramatist whose work attracted general attention, but was growing to be a serious competitor to the University Wits.

In 1593 a very serious epidemic of the plague broke out, and the theatrical performances were temporarily stopped. During that time Shakespeare must have written his narrative poem, "Venus and Adonis l'vines and o'downs!", published in the same year and dedicated to the Earl of Southampton (sau'hampton). In certain memoirs it is stated that for the poem Southampton made Shakespeare a present of £1,000, but by the standard of the time the sum was so colossal that we suspect the author of the memoirs of adding an extra nought. However, we may say for certain that Shakespeare was acquainted with Southampton and his friends, a circle of exquisite young aristocrats, among whose number was the Earl of Essex, Queen Elizabeth's favourite at one time. We may suppose that the acquaintance was a lasting one, for in the next year Shakespeare dedicated to Southampton another poem, "Lucrece ll[u:]:'kri:s!'" These two poems were the only works in the publication of which Shakespeare took part himself.

At the same time Shakespeare became closely allied to the theatre company of the Lord Chamberlain's Servants (or the Chamberlain's), headed by the great tragedian, Richard Burbage. In 1599 the company built and occupied the best-known of Elizabethan theatres, the Globe. Shakespeare eventually became a leading share-holder and the principal playwright to the company. He was also an actor, but, obviously, not a first-rate one: the parts which we know for certain he played were the old servant Adam in "As You Like It" and the Ghost in



Holy Trinity Church, Stratford, where Shakespeare was christened and buried.

Jonson also took part in the publication; his great poem to the memory of Shakespeare, some lines of which form the epigraph to this chapter, was included in the book.

And that was the way Shakespeare's immortality began...



The outer view of the Globe Theatre from a contemporary engraving.

which is now known as the First Folio. Sixteen plays in the collection were printed for the first time, among them such masterpieces as "Julius Caesar", "Measure for Measure", "Timon of Athens", "Macbeth", "Antony and Cleopatra", "Coriolanus", and "The Tempest". Ben

1609—1610 Cymbeline [ˈsɪmbɪliːn]
1610—1611 The Winter's Tale
1611—1612 The Tempest
1612—1613 Henry VIII

The only justifiable correction to this table was made by Leslie Hotson who proved "The Merry Wives of Windsor" to have been written around 1598.

It is quite possible that some of Shakespeare's early plays, such as the "Henry VI" trilogy or his revisions of older plays, were not written by him alone. It is almost certain that "Henry VIII" was written in collaboration with Fletcher, to whom the greater part of the text belongs.

There are some other plays, the authorship of which, at least partly, is attributed to Shakespeare, but it is wiser not to draw any definite conclusions about them.

Shakespeare's Plays

Shakespeare's literary work may be divided into four periods. The **first period**, dating from the beginning of his career to 1594, may be called the period of apprenticeship. The plays of that period were written under the influence of the University Wits and are cruder in their stage-craft and psychology than his later works. However, we must admit that one play written during that time, "Richard III", remains one of his most popular and most frequently staged works.

During the **second period**, from the 1594—1595 season up to 1600, Shakespeare wrote plays belonging mainly to two dramatic genres: histories (historical, or chronicle, plays) and comedies. The two tragedies written during those years, "Romeo and Juliet" and "Julius Caesar", differ greatly from his mature tragedies. The former, one of his most popular and frequently produced plays, is a true masterpiece; but its treatment of the material places it apart from his great tragedies. "Julius Caesar" in its construction resembles a history rather than a tragedy.

SHAKESPEARE'S COMEDIES

The comedies of Shakespeare did not establish a lasting tradition in the theatre, as did those written by Jonson or Molière. The plays of these authors portray the everyday life of their time with the characters exaggerated almost into satirical grotesques. The comedies

The Dating of Shakespeare's Plays

One of the main problems in the study of Shakespeare was the dating of his plays, which was satisfactorily solved in 1930 by a foremost Shakespearian scholar, Sir Edmund K. Chambers. This is the chronological table made by Sir Edmund; it is considered the most convincing one. The double dates indicate the theatrical season during which the particular play was first performed.

- 1590—1591 Henry VI, Part II
Henry VI, Part III
1591—1592 Henry VI, Part I
1592—1593 Richard III
The Comedy of Errors
1593—1594 Titus Andronicus ['tʌɪtəs æn'drɒnɪkəs]
The Taming of the Shrew
1594—1595 The Two Gentlemen of Verona [vɪ'rounəl]
Love's Labour's Lost
Romeo and Juliet ['roumɪoʊ ənd 'dʒu:ljət]
1595—1596 Richard II
A Midsummer Night's Dream
1596—1597 King John
The Merchant of Venice ['venɪs]
1597—1598 Henry IV, Part I
Henry IV, Part II
1598—1599 Much Ado About Nothing
Henry V
1599—1600 Julius Caesar ['dʒu:ljəs 'si:zəl]
As You Like It
Twelfth Night
1600—1601 Hamlet ['hæmlɪt]
The Merry Wives of Windsor ['wɪnzər]
1601—1602 Troilus and Cressida ['trɔɪləs ənd 'kresɪdə]
1603—1604 All's Well That Ends Well
1604—1605 Measure for Measure
Othello [ou'θelou]
1605—1606 King Lear [lɪə]
Macbeth [mək'beθ]
1606—1607 Antony and Cleopatra ['æntənɪ ənd klɪə'pætrə]
1607—1608 Coriolanus [kɔɪɪo'lænəs]
Timon of Athens ['taɪmən əv 'æθɪnz]
1608—1609 Pericles ['perɪkli:z]¹

¹ The only play not included in the First Folio.

of Shakespeare are composed on opposite principles. The scene is usually set in some imaginary country, and the action is based on stories that are almost fairy-tales. But within these non-realistic settings and plots are placed true-to-life characters depicted with the deep insight into human psychology for which Shakespeare is famed. Each comedy has a main plot and one or two sub-plots, and sometimes it is the sub-plot we pay most attention to. The comic characters of these plays always have an English flavour, even if the scene is laid in Athens, Illyria [ɪˈlɪrɪəl], or the inexplicable Forest of Arden.

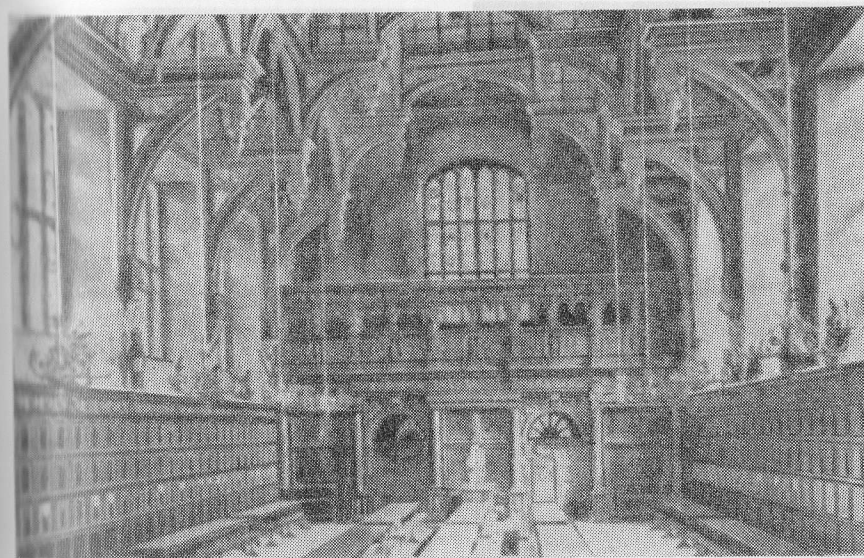
All these plays are written in easy-flowing verse and light, tripping prose. The text is full of jokes and puns, some of which contain topical allusions,¹ which are hard to understand in the 20th century. All the comedies tell of love and harmony, at first disturbed, finally restored. In them Shakespeare often treats one of his favourite motifs: the right of an individual to free choice in love, despite the conventions and customs of the time. To emphasize this point, Shakespeare more often than not embodies that tendency in a female character; his typical comedy heroines are brave, noble, full of initiative and free in speech. Another often recurring motif in the comedies is the contrast between appearance and reality. Shakespeare makes us see the importance of self-knowledge. In the complicated plots of his comedies the heroes and heroines select wrong partners so often because they have formed wrong opinions about their own characters. However, Shakespeare treats their mistakes good-humouredly, and the comedies end happily with the characters understanding themselves and those they love, and everything is brought to a harmonious conclusion.

Let us look more closely at one of his so-called "golden comedies", "Twelfth Night", the last play of his second period.

"TWELFTH NIGHT"

This comedy is built around the typical Shakespearian conflict between true and false emotion. Duke Orsino [ɔːˈsiːnou] tries to convince himself that he is in love with Countess Olivia [ɔːˈlɪvɪəl], literally hypnotizing himself into an "ideal" passion, modelled after Petrarch's sonnets, and growing more absorbed by his feelings after each rebuff received from her. In her turn, Olivia is in deep grief for her dead brother, having renounced all joy of life. In Shakespeare's opinion this is treachery to human nature, a view that is shared by Sir Toby Belch and Maria [mæˈrɪərɪəl], the comic characters that personify the optimism of the Renaissance. "The villain of the piece" is Malvolio

¹ topical allusions [əˈluːʒənz] — references to subjects of current interest.



Middle Temple Hall, where "Twelfth Night" was performed on February 2, 1602.

[mæɪˈvouljoul], a stuck-up hypocrite; in this figure Shakespeare caricatures rigid Puritan ethics, showing the contrast between Malvolio's outward morality and his inner dishonesty, cruelty and stupidity. "Dost thou¹ think, because thou art² virtuous, there shall be no more cakes and ale?" Sir Toby asks him. It must be remarked that Shakespeare's irony in depicting Malvolio is not bitter, and for all our antipathy to him, Malvolio remains a humorous rather than a satirical figure; otherwise the light vein of the play would be unbalanced.

After the plot has been quite tangled up, its solution is provided by the twin sister and brother, Viola [ˈvɪələ] and Sebastian [srˈbæs-tjən]; the marriage of Orsino to Viola and Sebastian to Olivia brings the desired happy ending, with the true passion in each case driving out the artificial one.

Viola is one of the famous Shakespearian comedy heroines, a true woman of the Renaissance: she is brave, adventurous, clever, witty, and capable of deep feeling. We see that in "Twelfth Night" three types of emotion are contrasted: the genuine and active love of Viola,

¹ Dost thou [ˈdɒst ðəu] (old use) — Do you.

² art (old use) — are.

Shakespeare's Histories

Shakespeare's histories, or chronicle plays, are more closely related to his tragedies than to the comedies. This was the genre in which he started his career as a playwright, and beginning with his first works, he gives us a vast dramatic cycle in which he deals with themes in the historical process, the laws of historical development, and the nature of power.

In his first historical tetralogy,¹ which includes the three parts of "Henry VI" and "Richard III", Shakespeare shows the evils of feudalism. In these plays, which show the Wars of the Roses, the predatory² nature of the feudal overlord is made very clear. The plays are a series of battles and conspiracies, of alliances formed and broken; they are full of treachery, brutality and suffering. Among the warring lords there arises a figure which is, probably, the most sinister one in all Shakespeare's plays. This is Richard, son to the Duke of York, who later becomes King Richard III. He first appears in "Henry VI" and says of himself:

Why, I can smile, and murder while I smile;

And wet my cheeks with artificial tears,
And frame my face to all occasions.

I can add colours to the chameleon;³

Can I do this, and cannot get a crown?
Tut! were it further off, I'll pluck it down.

("Henry VI", Part III, III, 2)⁴

This blood-thirsty hunchback is drawn as a villain on the grandest scale imaginable. Cruel, hypocritical, utterly unscrupulous, he is helped in his career by a tremendous will-power, an unshakable courage, a mighty intellect, a deep knowledge of human psychology, and a genuine, if cynical, wit. In "Richard III" we see how, having attained the crown, for the sake of which he has committed one crime after

¹ tetralogy [te'trælədʒi] — a work consisting of four parts, each of which may be considered independently of the others.

² predatory ['predətəri] — living by plunder and robbery.

³ chameleon [kə'mi:lən].

⁴ Here and further Roman numerals denote the act of the play; arabic figures, the scene of the act.



Maxine Audley ['mæksɪn 'ɔ:dlɪ] as *Viola*. *Vivien Leigh* ['vɪvɪən 'li:] and *Lord Olivier* [ə'lvɪə] as *Viola* and *Malvolio*.

the self-induced infatuation¹ of Orsino, and the so-called "love" of Malvolio, born out of his desire for gain and social elevation.

The play is written with great skill; the comic sub-plot of Sir Toby, Sir Andrew Ague-cheek [l'ægju:tʃi:k], Maria and Malvolio is intermingled with the lyrical story that forms the main plot, by the hand of a truly great master. Comedy and poetry are, so to speak, brought to a common denominator. The songs in "Twelfth Night" are probably the best Shakespeare ever wrote.

The songs are sung by Feste, Olivia's jester. He strikes a sobering note in the play. The wisest of all, he is able to see through all pretence, and the play turns on pretences, conscious or unconscious. An onlooker in all the events, he is the only character who finds no personal happiness in the final count. He gains nothing for himself, and the merry comedy ends with his sad song about "the rain that raineth² every day"...

¹ [ɪn'fætju'eɪʃən] — unreasoning love.

² raineth (*old use*) — rains.

another, he finds his former energy gone. Only on the eve of the Battle of Bosworth, where he is to perish, do his powers return, and he addresses his followers, proclaiming his immoral creed:

Go, gentlemen, every man unto his charge:¹

Conscience is but a word that cowards use,
Devis'd at first to keep the strong in awe:
Our strong arms be our conscience, swords our law.
March on, join bravely, let us to't pell-mell;²
If not to heaven, then hand in hand to hell.

("Richard III", V, 3)

These words of Richard Crookback are the quintessence of the principles that Shakespeare so profoundly hated.

The first historical tetralogy was written in a monumental, and yet in a rather crude manner; there is no subtle psychology in it, many characters are painted all black or all white (mostly all black). In the second historical tetralogy, which deals with an earlier period of English history (it consists of "Richard II", the two parts of "Henry IV", and "Henry V"), Shakespeare rose to the heights of his poetic and dramatic power. The theme of feudal decay is developed here with considerably greater finesse than in the first tetralogy. Probably the figures that embody the theme most vividly are to be seen in "Henry IV". The first is Henry Percy, nicknamed Hotspur. All the feudal virtues are seen in him: he is brave, straightforward, honourable, strong-willed. Although his manners are rude, and he is fiery-tempered and quarrelsome, we never doubt his honesty and his great ability as a warrior. Yet despite all this, Shakespeare shows Hotspur to be historically doomed: his participation in feudal civil wars brings disaster to the country, and his valour serves only to forward his personal ambition and makes all his heroic deeds fruitless. Another character in "Henry IV" is Sir John Falstaff, one of Shakespeare's greatest creations. If Hotspur is the concentration of feudal honour, Falstaff is a knight utterly devoid not only of feudal prejudices, but of all moral principles. When he has to take part in a battle, he tries to avoid it and discourses as follows:

"Can honour set to a leg? no: or an arm? no: or take away the grief of a wound? no. Honour hath³ no skill in surgery, then? no. What is honour? a word. What is in that word, honour? What is that honour?

¹ Let every man do his duty.

² Let us go to battle in a rush.

³ hath [hæθ] (*old use*) — has; *below*: doth [dʌθ] (*old use*) — does.

ah. A trim reckoning! — Who hath it? he that died o' Wednesday. Doth he feel it? no. Doth he hear it? no. Is it insensible, then? yea,¹ to the dead. But will it not live with the living? no. Why? detraction will not suffer it:² therefore I'll none of it.³ Honour is a mere scutcheon: ..." ⁴

("Henry IV", Part I, V, 1)

Coward, glutton, drunkard, Falstaff is cynical to the last degree; but he possesses a marvellous sense of humour and does not hesitate to aim his irony at himself as well; and this good-natured sense of humour gives him a peculiar charm.

When Shakespeare began analysing the nature of power and politics, the situation in England was such that the necessity of political stability, guaranteed by an undisputed monarchy, was apparent, and such a point of view was upheld by the theory of the Divine Right of Kings. By this theory, royal power is granted by God Himself, and anyone revolting against the lawful king is in a state of moral sin. Consciously or unconsciously, in his chronicle plays Shakespeare undermined this theory to a great extent. In such histories as "Richard II" and "Richard III" he proves convincingly that the dethronement and even the killing of an unworthy or a villainous king is a righteous and justifiable act.

But that is not all. If we look at Shakespeare's histories as a single whole, we may see that, all other things apart, they contain a profound and detailed treatise⁵ upon the nature of monarchy. In them Shakespeare shows us all the possible types of autocratic rulers.

King John — a mediocre⁶ villain.

Richard III — a great villain who, all the same, is a true genius. The historical Richard III was not such a dyed-in-the-wool (absolute) scoundrel as Shakespeare shows him; in depicting him, Shakespeare wanted to demonstrate the depths of depravity⁷ to which a villainous king would sink if endowed with the intellect of a genius.

Henry VI — a kind, learned, weak-willed, religious man; he has none of the qualities necessary to be ruler of a kingdom, so he brings as much suffering upon his country as a villainous king would.

¹ yea [jer] (*old use*) — yes.

² Slander will not permit it (*honour*) to live with the living.

³ I'll have none of it.

⁴ scutcheon ['skʌtʃən] — a coat of arms.

⁵ ['tri:tɪz] — a literary work dealing carefully with a particular subject.

⁶ [mi:drʌkəl] — of limited abilities.

⁷ depravity [di'prævɪtɪ] — moral corruption, viciousness ['vi:fəsnis].



Lord Olivier as Richard III.



Sir John Gielgud ['gi:lɡud] as Richard II.

Richard II — “a vain, shallow, foppish king with the soul of an artist”.¹ In him Shakespeare portrays egotism with the same skill as he portrays ambition in Macbeth or jealousy in Othello. It is only after losing his crown and being imprisoned that Richard begins to understand life and attains a certain majesty.

His cousin Henry Bolingbroke ['bɒlɪŋbrʊk], later King Henry IV, is a shrewd but unscrupulous politician. Having dethroned Richard II, he establishes a dangerous precedent,² and his former allies, various feudal lords, try to dethrone him in his turn, which starts a long series of feudal civil wars. Into his mouth Shakespeare puts one of the most beautiful soliloquies he ever wrote.

It is night. The old king, mortally ill, roams the empty halls of his palace; his soul is tortured by the news of feudal uprisings, and he is unable to sleep.

¹ These words were said about Richard II by Sir John Gielgud, one of the greatest Shakespearean actors of our time, and, among other parts, a marvellous performer of Richard II.

² ['presɪdənt] — earlier event, taken as an example or rule for what comes later.

How many thousand of my poorest subjects
Are at this hour asleep! — O sleep, O gentle sleep,
Nature's soft nurse, how have I frightened thee,¹
That thou no more wilt² weigh my eyelids down,
And steep³ my senses in forgetfulness?
Why rather, sleep, liest thou⁴ in smoky cribs,⁵
Upon uneasy pallets,⁶ stretching thee,
And hush'd with buzzing night-flies to thy⁷ slumber,
Than in the perfum'd chambers of the great,
Under high canopies⁸ of costly state,
And lull'd with sounds of sweetest melody?
O thou dull god, why liest thou with the vile⁹
In loathsome beds, and leav'st the kingly couch,
A watch-case¹⁰ or a common 'larum bell?¹¹
Wilt thou upon the high and giddy mast
Seal up the ship-boy's eyes, and rock his brains
In cradle of the rude imperious surge,¹²
And in the visitation of the winds,
Who take the ruffian billows by the top,
Curling their monstrous heads, and hanging them
With deafening clamour in the slippery shrouds,¹³
That, with the hurly,¹⁴ death itself awakes?
Canst thou, O partial sleep, give thy repose
To the wet sea-boy in an hour so rude;
And in the calmest and most stillest night,
With all appliances and means to boot,¹⁵
Deny it to a king? Then, happy low,¹⁶ lie down!
Uneasy lies the head that wears a crown.

(“Henry IV”, Part II, III, 1)

¹ thee [ði:] (old use) — you.

² wilt (old use) — will.

³ steep — plunge.

⁴ liest thou (old use) — do you lie (-st is the old ending of the verb in the 2nd person singular).

⁵ crib — a hut.

⁶ pallet ['pælit] — a straw mattress.

⁷ thy [ði] (old use) — your.

⁸ canopy ['kænəpi] — a covering over a bed.

⁹ the vile — the low-born.

¹⁰ watch-case — a place from which a watch is kept.

¹¹ a common 'larum bell — an alarm bell of a common (village community).

¹² surge — stormy sea.

¹³ shrouds — a set of ropes which support the masts of a ship.

¹⁴ hurly — uproar.

¹⁵ to boot — in addition.

¹⁶ (the) low — those in lowly situations.

But there is an antithesis to all these monarchs.

Shakespeare's Ideal King. At first we see him in "Henry IV" as Harry, Prince of Wales, when he is far from ideal. A brave but cynical young man, he spends his days in riotous living and forgets the feelings and duties of a son. Upon learning of his father's mortal illness, however, he suddenly changes and, after becoming Henry V, turns into a model of virtue with a speed that is hardly convincing.

In "Henry V" he is as different from Prince Hal in "Henry IV" as, incidentally, is the dull and stupid Falstaff in "The Merry Wives of Windsor" from the wonderful figure in "Henry IV".

Henry V is endowed with all the qualities which, in Shakespeare's opinion, a good king should possess to be really good. Shakespeare's Henry bears no resemblance to the historical Henry V, a cruel, effeminate and unscrupulous ruler. But Shakespeare used the figure of Henry V for the purpose of creating his ideal king just as he used the figure of Richard III to show the most vicious king possible.

The king in the play is brave, open-hearted, generous and democratic, more resembling a well-to-do farmer or artisan than the first aristocrat of the land. Courting the French princess, he says himself: "... thou wouldst find me such a plain king, that thou wouldst think I had sold my farm to buy my crown" ("Henry V", V, 2). Unlike all other kings described by Shakespeare, he places the interests of his country far above his personal interests. Under his sceptre he unites the different nations inhabiting the British Isles (the English, Scots, Irish and Welsh) on a basis of perfect equality. What is more important, he achieves a harmonious unity of all classes, paying particular attention to the common people. Indeed, the victory at Agincourt¹ is shown in the play as the victory of the English peasantry over the arrogant French nobility, who simply ignored the common people.

And yet the play is a failure, that is to say, a failure for Shakespeare. Had it been written by any one else, its author would have been proclaimed a genius, but for Shakespeare it is inferior to many of his other works. Some passages, including many of Henry's own speeches, the address of the Duke of Burgundy [ˈbɜːɡəndi] in which he persuades the warring monarchs to come to a peace agreement, and especially the speeches of the *Chorus*,² rank among the highest achievements

¹ A historical victory of the English over the French, achieved in the famous battle at Agincourt [ˈædʒɪŋkɔːt], a village of northern France, in 1415 (during the Hundred Years' War).

² The *Chorus* in Shakespeare's theatre was a single actor who commented on the action of plays, usually in the prologues and epilogues, and occasionally between the scenes.

of the great poet. But the figure of Henry, which forms the centre of the play, is lifeless and unconvincing, and no wonder: the character has no model in real life. In all European history we won't find a single monarch resembling Shakespeare's King Harry even distantly. But still, in "Henry V" Shakespeare made an attempt to prove that a good king is possible, if only theoretically.

Such were his views in his younger days. But when the time of his great third period came, they underwent considerable change...

THE THIRD PERIOD

During the third period of his literary career, from 1600 to 1608, Shakespeare wrote the great tragedies that were the peak of his achievement, and made him truly immortal.

We can't state the reason for it definitely, but we know for certain that approximately at the turn of the century the world outlook of Shakespeare radically changed. The joyous spirit of his early plays was gone forever, even the unclassifiable plays of the third period, which are usually called comedies, are bitter and produce an impression, strong, though far from pleasant. During the same period he became a consummate [kən'sʌmɪt] master of tragedy, creating the finest examples of the genre. His depictions of human character and psychology are unsurpassed.

In the Middle Ages a tragedy meant a literary work (not necessarily a play) dealing with the hero's transition from fortune to misfortune and ending with his death. Some Elizabethan tragedies also fall into this category. Shakespeare brought something new to the tragedy; this new element was first introduced by Marlowe, but it was Shakespeare who carried it to perfection. The hero of any Shakespearian tragedy perishes by reason of some trait of character that makes him either prefer some positive ideal to life, or else makes him betray an ideal and hence, meet his doom. All the tragic characters of Shakespeare are shown in their development; a hero at the end of the tragedy isn't the man he was at the beginning, his soul having undergone great changes. This is the first innovation introduced by Shakespeare. He did not master this manner of constructing tragedies at the beginning of his career. If we take "Romeo and Juliet", we can easily imagine a happy ending: if Friar Laurence [ˈfraɪə ˈləʊrəns] had arrived at the Capulets' [ˈkæpjulets] tomb five minutes earlier, there would have been no tragedy. But the logic of the characters in the great tragedies leads them to the inevitable end: even if Emilia [ɪˈmɪljə] had had the opportunity to prevent Othello from strangling Desdemona [ˌdezdrɪˈmounə],



Paul Robeson ['roubsn] as Othello.



Sir Michael Redgrave as Macbeth.

king (Hamlet Senior, Duncan [ˈdʌŋkən]), and seizes the throne, the son of the murdered king and lawful heir to the throne (Hamlet, Malcolm [ˈmælkəm]), begins his struggle against the usurper. But if in "Macbeth" the stress is on the psychology of the usurper, in "Hamlet" the main character is the man who opposes him.

"HAMLET"

"Hamlet" is one of Shakespeare's greatest creations, and it is also considered the hardest of his works to understand. Some critics proclaim it obscure and in the final count even mysterious. It is the most written-about of Shakespeare's plays and many different interpretations of it exist, some of them very discerning and clever, some amounting to downright nonsense. In our opinion, "Hamlet" can be properly understood only in comparison with "Macbeth" and "King Lear".

The source of the plot can be found in a Danish chronicle written around 1200. There is nothing "mysterious" in it whatever. The "mysterious" element in Shakespeare's play is found in the exceptionally complex character of Hamlet himself. Why does he delay avenging his father's murder? Why can't he make up his mind?

still he would have killed himself, having understood the depth of his moral degradation; even if Edgar had had the chance to save Cordelia [kɔ:'di:ljəl], Lear, having experienced all the evils of society, would never have returned to the throne to be the king he was at the beginning of the tragedy. The characters of Romeo and Juliet do not change to such a degree!

Shakespeare's second innovation is his way of explaining the evolution (or degradation) of his heroes by the social factors that form their psychology and influence their lives. The problems raised in Shakespeare's great tragedies still produce a terrific impression on our emotions and on our intellect.

In some of the tragedies Shakespeare treats important ethical themes. "Othello", for instance, shows us the conflict between the two moralities that have replaced medieval ideology (still strong, and represented in the play by Senator Brabantio [brə'bæntiəu]). A new morality, the morality of the Renaissance, is reflected in Othello and Desdemona who refuse to obey outworn rules and are united by true love, unrestrained by social or racial prejudices. The other morality of the time, in reality utter immorality, is to be seen in the hateful figure of Iago [i'ægou]. "Put money in the purse" is his motto. And falling under his influence, the noble Othello loses all the features that endeared him to us at the beginning of the play. This tragedy expresses the crisis of humanism: the Renaissance titans are no longer needed, and it is the Iagos who come to the top.

Many of Shakespeare's great tragedies are devoted to his favourite themes: the themes of state and society, the nature of power in general and the institution of monarchy in particular. If in the histories he shows us a gallery of none-too-attractive kings, while admitting that a good monarch is possible, if only theoretically, in his great tragedies he comes to the conclusion that monarchy is evil in its very essence, and can be nothing else. The different aspects of this idea are shown in "Hamlet", "Macbeth", and "King Lear", which form an anti-monarchic trilogy. There are some parallel motifs even in the plots of these plays. Have you noticed, for instance, that the theme of "Macbeth" is like that of "King Lear", but reversed, as in a mirror? If we formulate them in a rather simplified manner, they may be stated as follows:

Macbeth was human; he wanted to become a king; he became a king, and became a monster.

Lear was a king, and a monster; when he ceased being a king, he became human.

And where does "Hamlet" come in? Well, have you noticed that the plots of "Hamlet" and "Macbeth" are essentially the same? A usurper (Claudius [ˈklo:dʒəs], Macbeth) murders his near relative, the lawful

to make Laertes king: so how much easier would it have been for Hamlet!

No viler place than Elsinore [elsɪ'nɔ:] was ever shown by Shakespeare. The walls of the palace seem saturated with treachery. Poisoning, spying, eavesdropping are the rule there. And in that environment Hamlet is placed. He is a humanist, a scholar. Many passages in his speeches are in fact quotations from Erasmus, an author very popular in England in Shakespeare's time, so that the audience would have recognized them as quotations (including the famous "To be or not to be" soliloquy). Hamlet is the most intellectual of all Shakespearean characters: he is capable of reflecting on life and drawing general conclusions.

We first see him plunged into the depths of despair: he is grieved by the death of his father, shocked and horrified by the inconstancy and immorality of his mother, filled with disgust and hatred for Claudius, and begins to be disgusted with life in general:

How weary, stale, flat, and unprofitable
Seem to me all the uses¹ of this world!

(I, 2)

Later, after talking to the Ghost, he learns of a most foul crime, the murder of his father. The blow is the greatest he has ever felt, and he exclaims:

The time is out of joint:² — O curséd spite,
That ever I was born to set it right! —

(I, 5)

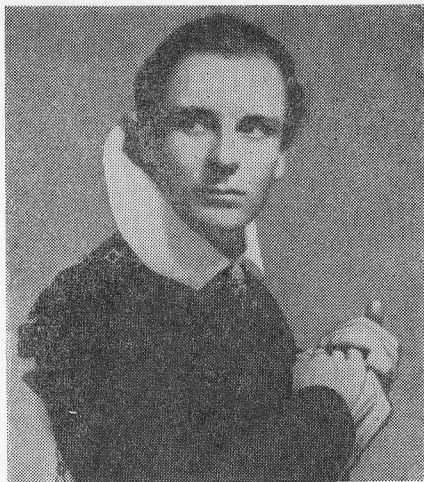
This couplet may be interpreted in different ways. The traditional explanation is that Hamlet is overwhelmed and depressed by the mission he is entrusted with, the mission of avenging his father's death, and doubts his ability to carry it out. But remembering some peculiarities of Elizabethan syntax, we may interpret it as follows: "Spite (evil), thou art cursed (doomed), because I was born to set right the wrongs of my time!"

The next scene begins with the dialogue of Polonius [pə'lounjəs] and Reynaldo [rer'nældou]. From it we understand that a considerable amount of time has passed since the previous scene.³ Enter

¹ what habitually occurs.

² Everything in our time is out of order; unsatisfactory.

³ A grave mistake was made by G. M. Kozintsev in his film version of "Hamlet", when Hamlet comes to Ophelia immediately after his conversation with the Ghost. In that case "the mouse-trap" is set less than forty-eight hours after Hamlet's learning of his father's being murdered. Then where is the delay for which Hamlet blames himself?



Sir John Gielgud as Hamlet.



Sir Michael Redgrave as Hamlet.

Various explanations have been offered. Some writers, like Goethe [ˈɡə:tə] considered Hamlet psychologically too delicate to carry out the mission laid on him. Others considered his will-power to be undermined either by his marked tendency to contemplation as opposed to action, his conviction of the futility¹ of life as such, or by his consciousness of his inability to destroy all the evil in the world even if he succeeded in destroying Claudius; and so forth. Even a special term, “hamletism”, was invented: it means a tendency to treat everything as futile, to doubt everything, to let thought prevail over action. Still other critics declared Hamlet to be a strong man with great will-power, and the delaying of his vengeance to be caused by obstacles of an objective character.

But Hamlet does constantly delay acting, and Shakespeare emphasizes the fact.

Let us remember that killing Claudius and taking the throne lawfully belonging to him, would have been easy for Hamlet. He is the lawful heir, loved by the people (this is mentioned in the text several times); everyone understands that Claudius is a usurper; there is such a strong atmosphere of discontent in the country that any king other than Claudius would be welcome. It was quite easy for Laertes [ler'ə:tɪz] to gather enough followers and storm the palace; they even wanted

¹ [tʃu'tɪlɪtɪ] — uselessness, ineffectiveness.

from the lower classes: the needy scholar Horatio [hɔ'reɪʃiəʊ], the actors, the soldiers, the grave-diggers...

As we may surmise, Hamlet, loved by the people, possessed all the qualities of an ideal monarch:

The courtier's, soldier's, scholar's eye, tongue, sword;
Th'expectancy and rose of the fair state,
The glass of fashion and the mould of form,
Th'observ'd of all observers...

(III, 1)

There was only one quality of a king he did not possess: the ability to be cunning and diplomatic, the ability to hatch intrigues. Even when for strategic reasons he pretended to be mad, his pretence consisted of speaking the truth straight out, as a result of which Claudius's suspicion of him was only heightened!

We repeat that it would have been easy for Hamlet to destroy Claudius and gain the throne for himself. And in such a situation his inaction called for greater wisdom and will-power than the most violent action. (For that reason the customary theatrical presentation of Hamlet as a weakling who is easily moved to tears is fundamentally wrong.) Some critics declare that Hamlet failed to achieve vengeance because he slew Claudius only when he was poisoned himself, and had but a few moments to live. But we explain the ease with which Hamlet kills Claudius in the last scene precisely by the fact that Hamlet knows there is now no danger of his becoming a king, a tyrant, a villain!

When the great Soviet producer Evgeni Vakhtangov staged the play "King Erik XIV" by the Swedish dramatist August Strinberg, he formulated its theme as follows: "royal power, bearing a contradiction to itself in its very essence, sooner or later must perish". Don't these words define the theme common to "Hamlet", "Macbeth", and "Lear"?

Of course, under the conditions of his time, Shakespeare could not put this idea into plain words: for such criminal thoughts he would either have been assassinated like Marlowe, or simply led to the gallows. (An insult to royalty was at that time punished by cutting off the offender's ears and nose.) But the true idea of the tragedy may be learned after careful reading.

This idea Shakespeare demonstrated with even greater force in "King Lear".

Ophelia [ɔ'fi:lǝ]; she tells her father of Hamlet's madness, which we know to be pretended. We understand that during that gap in time Hamlet has come to some conclusion that prevents him from avenging his father. More than that, we feel that the conclusion remains unsaid during the whole course of the play.

Probably Shakespeare never drew a more hateful character than Claudius. Traitor, hypocrite, flatterer, coward, this "smiling, damned villain", makes us hate him and sympathize with Hamlet.

Hamlet sincerely wants to kill Claudius, and we want him to do it, too. This is a natural course of action for a tragic hero. (We expect Romeo to kill Tybalt [tɪbɔlt] in revenge for Mercutio's [mæ:'kju:ʃjəuz] death; what should he do otherwise, fetch the police?) But Hamlet delays and goes on delaying. Let us make a supposition. If Hamlet avenged his father by slaying Claudius, what would happen then? He would inherit the throne...

But remember! Treachery reigns in Elsinore. Hamlet is betrayed again and again: by his former close friends Rosencrantz [rouzənkrænts] and Guildenstern [gɪldənstə:n], by the foolish Ophelia, by his mother, by Laertes, whom he holds in high esteem, by Osric... He understands that his struggle against the evils of Elsinore can only take the form of a struggle for the throne, and he hates the idea, for it would only mean his sinking to the level of Claudius, Polonius, and others of their kind; of his eventually becoming another Claudius.¹

It is in the grave-yard scene that we get an inkling of the play's hidden message. It is not, as is often supposed, a discourse upon the vanity and futility of human life as such, but a biting social satire. Who does Hamlet speak of in the grave-yard scene? A politician, a courtier, a lawyer, a buyer of land; then a lady, and finally, Alexander the Great and Julius Caesar, who were among the greatest rulers that ever existed. Only of Yorick [jɔ:rɪk] does Hamlet speak with genuine grief, but this is artistically necessary, because otherwise Hamlet would have seemed downright cynical; and yet we must remember that "poor Yorick" was a *court* fool! And then, it probably pleased Shakespeare to couple a monarch with a fool! Can one imagine Hamlet speaking about the vanity and uselessness of the life of a peasant or an artisan? It is amazing how firmly Shakespeare draws the social borderline: all the negative characters of the play are aristocrats, all for whom Hamlet expresses sympathy and who are in sympathy with him, come

¹ A similar interpretation of "Hamlet" has been made by the Soviet scholar A. L. Stein.

Even if Cordelia had pleased Lear the most, she could not have drawn "a third more opulent", because there remained only that part of the kingdom originally intended for her. Cordelia revolts against Lear's pretensions and love of flattery; she is also disgusted by her sisters' hypocrisy. Lear flies into a rage, and drives her away. Another person revolts against Lear, the Earl of Kent, but for a different reason. Kent is endowed with the slavish psychology of a feudal vassal, and protests against Lear's behaviour, which he considers unworthy of a true king. Kent, to quote a French saying, is "more royalist than the king himself". It is this psychology of a vassal that makes Kent disguise himself and serve Lear again, despite the fact that the king has unjustly punished him and deprived him of all his rights. Lear's personality and behaviour give no cause whatever for such affection; it is not Lear himself that Kent loves, but the principle of monarchy personified in him. At the end of the play, Edgar, a truly heroic and noble character, tells the Duke of Albany [ʔ:lbəni] how Kent followed Lear, in disguise, "and did him service improper for a slave" (V, 3). Hardly a compliment, is it?



Sir Michael Redgrave as Lear.

Very soon Lear begins to understand that, having renounced his crown, he can no longer lay claim to any honour and respect whatever, even from his daughters. He is helped to understand this by his Fool, "a bitter Fool", who calls the old man "Lear's shadow" and by his stinging jokes makes the ex-monarch see the true state of things.

The conflict between Lear and his elder daughters is brought to a crisis by their refusing to let him have a hundred knights in his service. After hearing Regan declare that there is no need for him to have even one knight in his service, Lear says:

O reason not the need! Our basest beggars
Are in the poorest things superfluous:¹

¹ Have some trifle not absolutely necessary.

"KING LEAR"

In "King Lear" Shakespeare shows the very foundations of monarchy to be inhuman, demoralizing, and monstrous. In the first scenes of the play Lear is an old king, drunk with the sense of his almighty power. This sense prompts him to put his power to a final proof by renouncing his royal authority and dividing his kingdom between his three daughters. The reason for this action lies in Lear's conviction of his personal greatness, which, as he thinks, does not depend upon his kingship but will be with him in any circumstances. He is sure that the kingdom will remain a kingdom without a king, and that he will remain a king without his kingdom. He calls this intention "our darker (that is, hidden, top-secret) purpose", although at the very beginning of the play we learn that this plan is known among the courtiers, for Gloucester says that "equalities are so weighed that curiosity in neither can make choice of either's moiety", which means that the kingdom is divided into absolutely equal shares, and no princess will have cause to consider herself dealt with unfairly. Nevertheless, in his first speech Lear commands the princesses:

. — Tell me, my daughters, —
.
Which of you shall we say doth love us most?
That we our largest bounty may extend
Where nature doth with merit challenge. ¹

(I, 1)

Now, that is pure demagoguery: the plans for the kingdom's division have been drawn up beforehand, and it is impossible to suppose that even if one daughter were to outshine her sisters in her declarations of love, the dealing out of the shares would be changed. No, the old tyrant simply wants to feast on words of praise. And the contest of flattery begins. The elder daughters, Goneril [ˈɡɒnəriːl] and Regan [ˈriːɡən], make flowery and insincere speeches in which they declare their affection for the wilful and stupid old man; he is inordinately pleased with the proceedings, and addresses his youngest daughter Cordelia:

. what can you say to draw
A third more opulent than your sisters? Speak.

(I, 1)

¹ That is, "that we should give the largest share to that one of you whose natural love for us is the greatest".

You must have noticed that there are paradoxes in the tragedy's construction: Lear attains true dignity only when he loses his crown and becomes a beggar, he becomes truly wise only when he goes mad; Gloucester sees the truth about his sons after he has been blinded... But probably the greatest paradox of the play lies in the final catastrophe being caused by those who love Lear most: by Kent and Cordelia.

When Lear's conflict with his elder daughters begins, Kent gets in touch with Cordelia, who has become the queen of France. After the heath scenes we see Cordelia land in England with a troop of soldiers to save her father. Awakening in Cordelia's tent, Lear asks:

Am I in France?

Kent. In your own kingdom, sir.

Lear. Do not abuse me.

(IV, 7)

Lear's words may be explained as "do not deceive me", but they may also be interpreted as follows: "Do not insult me by supposing that I still want to be king." By then he has already learned the laws of life and grasped the scope of social evil. It would have been commendable if Cordelia had taken Lear to France, where he could have spent his remaining years in peace.¹ Nevertheless, Cordelia insists on waging war upon her sisters in order to restore the crown to Lear, as a result of which she perishes herself and causes Lear to die of grief. And we may surmise that in the last scene of the tragedy Lear calls Cordelia "my poor fool" precisely because she started the war for the crown.

The sub-plot of the tragedy tells of the relations between the Earl of Gloucester and his two sons. There is a parallel and also a contrast between Lear and Gloucester. Like Lear, Gloucester rejects the worthy child and favours the unworthy, for which he suffers greatly; but, unlike Lear, he does not grasp the essence of life, and sums up his experience in these pessimistic lines:

As flies to wanton² boys, are we to th' gods, —
They kill us for their sport.

(IV, 1)

Gloucester's illegitimate son Edmund is one of the most unprincipled villains created by Shakespeare. His career is also built upon a paradox: the higher he climbs the social ladder, the lower he sinks morally. In the end he is slain in single combat by his half-brother Edgar,

¹ This was pointed out by the eminent British scholar A. C. Bradley in his classical work "Shakespearian Tragedy".

² wanton ['wontən] — playful.

Allow not nature more than nature needs,¹
Man's life is cheap as beast's (II, 4)

After that, shaken by wrath and grief, Lear roams the heath during a storm, and reaches a new stage in his understanding of the world:

Poor naked wretches, wheresoe'er you are,
That bide² the pelting of this pitiless storm,
How shall your houseless heads and unfed sides,
Your loop'd and window'd³ raggedness, defend you
From seasons such as these? O, I have ta'en⁴
Too little care of this! Take physic, pomp;⁵
Expose thyself to feel what wretches feel,
That thou mayst shake the superflux to them.
And show the heavens more just.

(III, 4)

In this great speech we see the trend of Shakespeare's thought: "superflux" means things not absolutely necessary for man to keep body and soul together; in other words, Shakespeare proposes equal distribution of wealth without which the heavens are unjust; that is, Shakespeare shares Thomas More's Utopian communism.⁶

Lear goes temporarily mad, but in his madness utters some of the wisest words ever said:

Through tatter'd clothes small vices do appear;
Robes and furr'd gowns hide all. Plate sin with gold,
And the strong lance of justice hurtless⁷ breaks;
Arm it in rags, a pigmy's straw doth pierce it.
None does offend, none, — I say, none ...

(IV, 6)

Of course, by saying that "none does offend", that is "no one is to blame", Lear does not preach all-forgiveness, but states that the real cause of crime and evil in the world cannot be laid to the door of any single individual but to the reigning social inequality. The tyrant Lear has vanished, and we see a great sufferer who understands the order of things and condemns it.

¹ ... needs to sustain life.

² bide (*old use*) — endure.

³ looped and windowed — full of holes.

⁴ ta'en — taken.

⁵ Take medicine to cure yourselves, you great men.

⁶ Shakespeare's sharing Utopian communistic views was first proved by the Soviet scholar V. M. Kozhevnikov.

⁷ without hurting the sinner.

And give them title, knee, and approbation,¹
With senators on the bench

But yet I'll bury thee: thou'lt go, strong thief,
When gouty keepers of you cannot stand: —
Nay,² stay thou out for earnest.

(IV, 3)

"Timon of Athens" is one of the earliest works of literature condemning the power of money, and, probably, the greatest. No wonder Karl Marx held a very high opinion of the tragedy, and quoted it in "Capital".

"Timon of Athens" ended the third period of Shakespeare's literary work. The end of the period was also marked by the publication of his sonnets.

THE SONNETS

Shakespeare's sonnets can't be placed among his best works; only a few of them may be placed among the best English sonnets in general; but they occupy a unique place in the Shakespearian heritage, because they are his only lyrical pieces, the only things he has, it seems, written about himself.

Critics differ in establishing the degree in which the poet's life was reflected in the sonnets: some hold the opinion that literally every line is absolutely autobiographical, while others think there were variations on themes traditional in Renaissance poetry. The truth, probably, lies some place halfway.

We do not know for certain who were the prototypes of the sonnets' characters, and, unless some yet undiscovered authentic documents come to light, we shall never know. It would be wiser to treat the sonnet sequence just as a story written in verse without trying to probe too deeply into the real-life facts behind it.

The three main characters are the Poet, his Friend, and the Dark Lady. The Poet expresses the warmest admiration for the Friend, almost prostrating himself before him. Some of his words may seem exaggerated to us, but at that time it was customary to express one's friendship in a most ardent manner unusual in our days.

The Dark Lady is the beloved of the Poet; unlike the idealized ladies in the sonnets of Petrarch and his followers, she is false and jealous, but the Poet, though aware of the fact, can't help loving her.

¹knee and approbation — respect and approval.
²Nay (*old use*) — No.

who, having been slandered and beggared, becomes the defender of justice and finally triumphs.

The end of the tragedy is quite unlike any other in Shakespeare's works. All the other plays built around affairs of state end with the coronation of a new king: Richmond, Malcolm, or Fortinbras [ˈfɔːtɪnbɹæs]. And only in "King Lear" is there no coronation, and the throne is left unoccupied, for the Duke of Albany shares the right to rule the land with Edgar. We may say that the tragedy's ending is Utopian, and Shakespeare shows that his concept of a state founded on justice does not include a king.

The Power of Money as Seen in Shakespeare's Works

Shakespeare had ample opportunities to observe the growth of capitalism as the chief tendency of his epoch. The theme of the power of money is treated in many of his plays: in the dialogue between Romeo and the Apothecary in "Romeo and Juliet"; in "King John", "Henry IV", "The Merry Wives of Windsor", "Measure for Measure"; it is one of the main motifs in "The Merchant of Venice"; it is summed up in "Timon of Athens", the last tragedy Shakespeare ever wrote. Although the story of Timon is taken from ancient authors and the scene of the play is laid in ancient Athens, we see the society of Shakespeare's time. Timon, a rich and noble Athenian, is generous to his friends, but when he meets financial difficulties, they refuse to help him, and he is completely ruined. He becomes a misanthrope (a hater of mankind), and retires to a forest cave. The speeches of Timon in which he curses humanity are among the most powerful lines written by Shakespeare. His skill in the composition of this tragedy is seen by the fact that we neither resent Timon's bitter and pessimistic views nor share them, but experience a deep sympathy for him and an even deeper hatred of the vicious social order that brought this kind and generous man to such a state.

While living in the cave, Timon finds a treasure, a hoard of gold and speaks of it in the following words:

Thus much of this will make black, white; foul, fair;
Wrong, right; base, noble; old, young; coward, valiant.

.....
This yellow slave
Will knit and break religions; bless the accurs'd;
Make the hoar leprosy¹ ador'd; place thieves,

¹ When a person is struck by leprosy [ˈleprəsi], an infectious skin disease, the skin becomes white, thence hoar (white) leprosy.

That wear this world out to the ending doom.
So, till the judgment that yourself arise,
You live in this, and dwell in lovers' eyes.

CXLVII.

My love is as a fever, longing still
For that which longer nurseth the disease;
Feeding on that which doth preserve the ill,
The uncertain sickly appetite to please.
My reason, the physician to my love,
Angry that his prescriptions are not kept,
Hath left me, and I desperate now approve
Desire is death, which physic did except.
Past cure I am, now reason is past care,
And frantic mad with evermore unrest;
My thoughts and my discourse as madmen's are,
At random from the truth vainly express'd;
For I have sworn thee fair, and thought thee bright,
Who art as black as hell, as dark as night.

The sonnets show how Shakespeare's incomparable poetic style was forged and perfected; to some extent they raise the veil over his private life, of which we know so little. Quite a number of them may be read as lyrical pieces, independent of the whole.

The Fourth Period

As we remarked before, the last years of Shakespeare's career as a playwright are characterized by a considerable change in the style of the drama. Beaumont and Fletcher became the most popular dramatists, and the plays of Shakespeare written during his fourth period are modelled after their dramatic technique. All of them are written around a dramatic conflict, but the tension in them is not so great as in the tragedies; all of them have happy endings. His plays are genuinely poetic, although sometimes unevenly written; in them we may perceive an expression of the lofty humanist ideals typical of Shakespeare, but on the whole we get an impression that he is telling us fairy-tales in which he doesn't believe himself. However, in the play that was probably the last one written by him, the play in which he bids farewell to the theatre is one of the most profound and significant he ever wrote. It is "The Tempest".

(The adjective "dark" does not mean merely "dark-haired", but is a synonym for "wicked", "sinister".)

And then comes the tragedy: the Friend and the Dark Lady betray the Poet.

By reading between the lines of the sonnets, we may see a tragedy in Shakespeare's life, a tragedy which he might not have fully understood himself. Despite the author's intention, we see that the Poet's Friend, who is praised with such great feeling, is a shallow, cruel and petulant man; the Dark Lady, likewise, is shown to be wicked and lying. And so in the sonnets we may see the great misfortune of a genius who wasted his life and his soul for the sake of persons unworthy of him.

This event must have produced a powerful impression on Shakespeare, for in many of his plays there are two characters, a younger and an elder one; the elder entertains a great affection for the younger, and the younger betrays the elder. Sometimes we sympathize with the elder character, sometimes with the younger, but the situation is the same; remember Falstaff and Prince Henry, Julius Caesar and Brutus [ˈbru:təs], Othello and Iago, Menenius Agrippa [məˈni:nəs əˈɡrɪpəl] and Coriolanus.

There is a major theme running through the cycle: the theme of the implacability of Time. How can one triumph over it? Shakespeare gives two answers. The first is: one lives for ever in one's children, in one's posterity. The second is: one may achieve immortality if one's features are preserved by art, and particularly in poetry. Here Shakespeare composes some masterful variations on the theme of the immortality of poetry, a theme that was introduced by the great Roman poet Horace [ˈhɒrəs].

LV.

Not marble, nor the gilded monuments
Of princes, shall outlive this powerful rime;
But you shall shine more bright in these contents
Than unswept stone, besmear'd with sluttish time.
When wasteful war shall statues overturn,
And broils root out the work of masonry,
Nor Mars his sword ¹ nor war's quick fire shall burn
The living record of your memory.
'Gainst death and all-oblivious enmity
Shall you pace forth; your praise shall still find room,
Even in the eyes of all posterity

¹ Mars' sword.

Execute all things: for no kind of traffic
Would I admit; no name of magistrate;
Letters¹ should not be known; riches, poverty,
And use of service, none; contract, succession,²
Bourn, bound³ of land, tilth, vineyard, none;
No use of metal, corn, or wine, or oil;
No occupation; all men idle, all;
And women too; but innocent and pure;
No sovereignty: —

.....
All things in common nature should produce
Without sweat or endeavour: treason, felony,⁴
Sword, pike, knife, gun, or need of any engine,⁵
Would I not have; but nature should bring forth,
Of its own kind, all foison,⁶ all abundance
To feed my innocent people

.....
I would with such perfection govern, sir,
T'excel the golden age.

(II, 1)

Shakespeare understood this to be but a beautiful dream, for in his time there was no actual social force to carry anything like it into reality. And now it is time to say a few words about another important aspect of Shakespeare's philosophy.

Shakespeare's Attitude to the People

Some critics hold the opinion that Shakespeare despised the common people; he showed the wild violence of Jack Cade's rebellion in "Henry VI", Part II, showed the ease with which the people may be deceived in "Julius Caesar", did not hesitate to depict the rough and uncouth Caliban... But there is another side to the problem.

Shakespeare did not idealize the people, he knew that common men in his time were uneducated and politically immature, but, more vividly than any of his contemporaries and many writers to come after him, he showed the people to be the main driving force of history,

letters (*pl*) — a certified document granting rights to its bearer.
succession — the right of succeeding to a title, the throne, a dignity or property.
bourn (*old word*), bound — boundary, limit.
felony [*'feləni*] — very serious crime (murder, armed robbery, etc.).
engine — *here*, machine.
foison [*'fɔizən*] (*old word*) — plentiful harvest; good crop.

"THE TEMPEST"

In this allegorical play Shakespeare's thoughts of life and society are concentrated; it reflects the crisis of humanism which he witnessed in his declining years.

Prospero [ˈprɒspərəʊ], Duke of Milan [mɪˈlæn], was so absorbed by his studies of nature, that he gave his brother an opportunity to usurp his throne. Prospero and his daughter escaped to a desert island formerly occupied by the witch Sycorax [ˈsɪkəræks]; the latter's son, the savage Caliban [ˈkælɪbæn], became Prospero's slave and did all the hard work. By his magic Prospero also enslaved the spirit Ariel [ˈæriəl], who symbolizes the forces of nature. Caliban craves freedom and hates Prospero:

You taught me language; and my profit on't
Is, I know how to curse. The red plague rid you ¹
For learning me your language!

(I, 2)

As the action of the play unfolds, Caliban rebels against Prospero, but is defeated. Prospero becomes reconciled to his treacherous brother, and gets his daughter Miranda [mɪˈrændə] happily married; his throne is restored to him, but at a great price: he renounces his magical power over nature. Further intentions he expresses in the words:

I'll
.
. retire me to my Milan, where
Every third thought shall be my grave.

(V, 1)

As we see, the ending of the play, though outwardly happy, is really very bitter. Shakespeare shows the incompatibility of humanism with worldly power, and the deep abyss that has to be crossed by the humanists to reach the people.

The positive ideal of the author is hinted at in the speech of the noble old Gonzalo [ˈɡɒnzələʊ]; in it we again perceive Utopian motifs:

Had I plantation of this isle, my lord, —

.
And were the king on't, what would I do?

.
I' ² the commonwealth, I would by contraries

¹ Let the plague rid us of you!

² I' — In.

and acknowledged his unsurpassed merit; among them were Karl Marx, Frederick Engels, Goethe, Pushkin, Victor Hugo, and many others.

A writer is a true classic, if every new generation finds new and hitherto unperceived aspects of his works; such is the case with Shakespeare. His popularity all over the world grows from year to year. Performances of major Shakespearian parts are a kind of actors' examination for the right to be called great. Productions of Shakespeare, translations of Shakespeare, critical works on Shakespeare are an indicator of the cultural level of any given nation. The Soviet Union has good cause to be proud of having given many valuable contributions to world Shakespeariana.

Exercises

1. Tell the story of Shakespeare's life.

2. What political events of the time may have influenced Shakespeare in his childhood?
3. Speak about Shakespeare's early education at Stratford-on-Avon, and later on his contact with intellectual circles in London.
4. Which of Shakespeare's poems were first published and to whom were they dedicated?
5. Who was Richard Burbage?
6. Comment on Shakespeare's activities as a dramatist and actor at the Globe Theatre.
7. Why and when did Shakespeare retire to Stratford?

Shakespeare's Works:

1. By whom were Shakespeare's works collected and published?
2. What plays belong to each of the four periods of Shakespeare's creative work?
3. When did Shakespeare write his sonnets? What sonnet form did he use?
4. Who are the characters in the sonnets and what are the themes that appear in them?

The Comedies:

1. What is the chief topic dealt with in the comedies?
2. Tell the story of "Twelfth Night".
3. Name the leading characters of the play.
4. What is the conflict in the play?
5. According to Shakespeare, only actions dictated by natural feelings are justifiable: how is this idea expressed by the characters in the comedy?
6. How does the comedy end?

without the support of whom no movement can succeed. A very significant scene was included by him in "Henry VI", Part I, one of his earliest plays. The Countess of Auvergne [ou'və:n] lays a trap to capture the famous English general Lord Talbot [t'ɔ:lbət], and is surprised by his small stature and weak physique:

Alas, this is a child, a silly dwarf!
It cannot be this weak and wrinkled shrimp¹
Should strike such terror to his enemies.

("Henry VI", Part I, II, 3)

Talbot replies:

No, no, I am but shadow of myself;
You are deceived, my substance is not here...

He blows his horn, after which his soldiers rush in and deliver him, and Talbot says of himself: "these are his substance, sinews, arms, and strength".

A similar view is held in his later plays. Richard II and Richard III perish because they are not supported by the people; the same is the case with the noble Brutus in "Julius Caesar", whereas such political adventurers as Henry IV and Mark Antony [t'æntənɪ] succeed because they take pains to draw the people to their side. The great Roman general Coriolanus despises and hates the common people, which eventually leads him to betray his country and die a shameful death. On the contrary, the only ideal ruler in all Shakespeare's works, Henry V, identifies himself with his people, and achieves brilliant results.

SHAKESPEARE'S IMMORTALITY

In many of his views Shakespeare was far ahead of his time. He rejected feudalism, but was sober and shrewd enough to see the evils and vices of growing capitalism. He did not point out any definite means towards the achievement of his ideals, which were rather vague, he could give no concrete answers to the problems he put forth, but he was a truly great inquirer, and his unparalleled penetration into life gives us, his true heirs, an opportunity to answer his questions better than he could himself. His works are truly immortal, and will retain their immortality as long as the human race exists. It is only natural that the greatest minds of the world admired Shakespeare

¹ shrimp — a very small or unimportant person or creature.

7. What contradiction underlies the plot and brings about the comic situations in the comedy?

The Historical Plays:

1. What is the chief idea developed in the historical plays?
2. Describe the character of Richard III as a typical representative of feudal brutality, conspiracy, and treachery.
3. According to the laws of historical development, the feudal knight, whether he is chivalrous or not, is doomed.
Describe the two knights, Hotspur and Falstaff, as representatives of decaying feudalism.
4. Compare Shakespeare's "ideal king" with the gallery of kings appearing in his histories. Is an ideal king possible?

The Tragedies:

1. How did Shakespeare deal with the idea of monarchy in the third period of his creative work? Follow the development of such characters as Macbeth, Lear and Hamlet in connection with the crown.
2. Describe Hamlet as a young man of the Renaissance period.
3. What is his attitude to the hypocrisy and treachery that reign at court?
4. Who are Hamlet's enemies and who are his friends?
5. What social satire is concealed in the grave-yard scene?
6. Did Hamlet possess the qualities required in a king? Would it have been easy for him to become king?
7. Everybody expects Hamlet to kill Claudius; what makes him delay his vengeance as he does?
8. Which demanded greater will-power in Hamlet's situation, action or delay?
9. What makes Hamlet finally kill Claudius with ease?
10. Was there any other way out for Hamlet?
11. Tell the story of "King Lear".
12. How does Shakespeare show the tragic character of King Lear in development?
13. What social ideas does Lear come to through his trials?
14. What paradoxes are there in the construction of the tragedy? What is achieved by this device?
15. Why is the play "King Lear" Shakespeare's greatest work dealing with the theme of state and society? What is Shakespeare's conception of the real cause of crime as shown in "King Lear"?
16. Compare Shakespeare's tragedies of the first and third periods: in the tragedies of which period would a happy ending be possible?
17. Dwell on the power of money in its relation of man to man.

Plays of the Fourth Period:

1. How does the style of Shakespeare's plays change in the fourth period?
2. Why is "The Tempest" considered the most profound and significant among the plays of the fourth period?
3. What was Shakespeare's attitude to the common people?

Review Questions

I.

1. What did Engels say about the Renaissance period as the beginning of a new ideology?
2. How did the ideas of the Renaissance influence European politics in general, and the English monarchy and religion in particular?
3. What is meant by the Revival of Learning?
4. Who was Sir Thomas More? Why is his work "Utopia" historically important?
5. Speak about the different forms of literature that appeared during the Renaissance. What was the role of the theatres at that time?

II.

1. Into how many periods is Shakespeare's creative work divided? Name the chief plays written during each period.
2. How does the character of Viola, who acts on her own initiative, differ from the women of the Middle Ages, who acted according to religious dogmas in defiance of reason?
3. In what way does Shakespeare affirm the right of man to freedom and happiness? Refer to his comedies. How can you tell that Shakespeare believed in the triumph of virtue and reason?
4. What features of the life of his time are revealed by Shakespeare in the tragedy of "Hamlet"?
5. Describe the complex character of Hamlet.
6. Explain how the ideals of the Renaissance conflict with the evil forces of the time.
7. Speak about the different interpretations of Hamlet's tragedy.
8. Speak about the Shakespearean sonnet. Explain the ideas expressed in the sonnets LV, CXLVII.
9. What was Shakespeare's contribution to world literature?

II. English Literature During the Bourgeois Revolution

Historical Background. At the beginning of the 17th century the contradictions between the feudal nobility and the bourgeoisie reached their climax.

As the role of the absolute monarchy was no longer progressive and hindered the further development of capitalism, the bourgeoisie, which had once supported the king, turned against absolute monarchy.

All through the reign of James I (1603—1625), the Commons quarrelled with the king for controlling trade and raising taxes without the consent of Parliament.

The struggle between the two sides continued during the reign of Charles I, who took his father's place on the throne in 1625. The Commons worked out the Petition of Rights, aimed at limiting the king's rights, and the king was compelled to sign it. Several times Charles dissolved Parliament and then called it again in the hope of restoring his rights. At last, to crush the opposition, he decided never to call another Parliament, and ruled autocratically for eleven years, till 1640. His reign during this period was supported by the Church and was marked by extreme injustice and cruelty, which turned people's minds against the monarchy and the Church.

Those supporting the king were called Cavaliers, or Royalists. The Puritans, or the petty bourgeoisie, took the lead in resisting the king. It was easy to distinguish the Puritans from the Cavaliers: the Puritans cut their hair very close to the head, for which they were nicknamed "Roundheads", while the Cavaliers had flowing locks and wore rich clothes.

In 1640 the need of money for the war with Scotland compelled the king to call another Parliament. The Commons at once began to attack him for his bad government during the previous years. The king became angry and dissolved Parliament again. This Parliament is called in history the "Short Parliament". But the Scots marched into the north of England and the king was forced to summon Parlia-

"Methinks I see in my mind a noble and puissant nation
rousing herself like a strong man after sleep..."

MILTON



In 1688 Parliament worked out the Bill of Rights, according to which the royal power, the armed forces, and taxation were brought under the control of Parliament. King James II fled to France, and in 1689 the crown was offered to his daughter Mary and her husband William of Holland. These events were called the "Glorious Revolution". It was not a people's revolution, it was an agreement between the bourgeoisie and the landed aristocracy. Thus constitutional monarchy was established, which marked the end of the whole revolutionary epoch of the 17th century.

The political struggles involving the broad masses of the English population led to the publication of news pamphlets and political pamphlets, and laid the foundation of journalism and the periodical press. The English people took a tremendous interest in all the political events of the time. There appeared pamphlets which not only reported events, but also explained them to the people. Satirical ballads on contemporary themes were also published in pamphlet form.

The greatest of all publicists during the Puritan Revolution was the poet John Milton. His pamphlets gave theoretical foundation to the struggle of the bourgeoisie against the monarchy.

During the Renaissance poetry had been the most popular form of literature. During the Revolution prose became very popular because it was easier to write on social and political problems in prose.

ment again to get its consent to raise new taxes. This Parliament is known as the "Long Parliament" because it lasted off and on for 19 years, till 1653. Parliament passed an Act saying that the king's ministers should be responsible to Parliament and that Parliament could be dissolved only by its own consent. The king, however, thought he could turn the course of historical events in his favour by force, and in 1642 he gathered an army and declared war on Parliament. Thus the Civil War between the Royalists and the Parliamentarians began, which lasted from 1642 till 1649.

King Charles was supported by the old nobility and by the Church. The Parliamentary Army, headed by Oliver Cromwell, consisted of representatives of the bourgeoisie and the gentry (new nobility); they also gained the support of the yeomen, artisans, and other working people, who by that time had realized that the taxes they had paid to the king under the old feudal laws had been used not for national purposes, but in the interests of the crown and the old nobility.

Oliver Cromwell was a member of the Long Parliament and the leader of the Independents, who demanded the overthrow of the monarchy. He had military talents and created an army of a "New Model", a "troop of horse" under iron discipline.

The fact that the popular masses took the side of Parliament against the Royalists decided the results of the war. The latter were defeated and the Bourgeois Revolution (sometimes called the Puritan Revolution) triumphed. Charles Stuart [ˈstjuːətl] was tried and beheaded in January, 1649, the House of Lords abolished, and a Commonwealth (or Republic) proclaimed. Later, however, frightened by the rising revolutionary spirit of the masses, Cromwell intensified his oppression and in 1653 imposed a military dictatorship on the country. It lasted till his death in 1658.

As neither the common people nor the upper classes were satisfied with the results of the Puritan Revolution, the monarchy was restored after Oliver Cromwell's death.

Charles II, son of the executed king, ascended the throne in 1660. The years between 1660 and 1688 are called the "Restoration", but try as he would, Charles was unable to restore the old state of things. Neither could his successor James II with the support of reactionary groups in England and Ireland establish a despotic regime.

By that time two main parties had been formed in Parliament, one representing the interests of business men, the other, the interests of the land-owners and clergy. The two parties hated each other so much that the insulting nicknames of "Whigs" for business men and "Tories" for land-owners were invented. Later, these names came to be used officially.

to satisfy his thirst for knowledge. He met the great Galileo [ˌgælɪˈleɪoʊ], who was no longer a prisoner of the Inquisition, but was still watched by Catholic churchmen. Milton succeeded in getting into the house where Galileo was kept. His meeting with the great martyr of science is mentioned in "Paradise Lost" and in an article about the freedom of the press. In 1639 he returned to England, just when the struggle between the king and the Puritan bourgeoisie began. For some time Milton had to do educational work, and the result of it was a treatise on education.

Milton kept a keen eye on the public affairs of the time. The years between 1640 and 1660, **the second period** in his literary work, were the years when he wrote militant revolutionary pamphlets. His views on civil and religious liberty made him the most prominent pamphlet-writer of the Independents.

When the Republican Government under Cromwell was established in the year 1649, Milton was appointed Latin Secretary to the Council of State. The work consisted chiefly of translating diplomatic government papers into Latin and from Latin.

In his pamphlets, most of which were written in Latin, Milton made Europe understand that the Puritan Revolution was not just a great rebellion, as the Royalists insisted, but that it was the only force which could give the people rights and freedom. The execution of the king, he said, should not be regarded as bloodshed by a cruel people, but as the only means by which the people could free themselves from the monarchy; and that the king was not a martyr, but the worst of enemies in the cause of liberty. During his years as Latin Secretary and journalist Milton wrote only a few sonnets.

Milton had weak eyes even as a child; in 1652 he lost his eyesight completely.

With the restoration of the monarchy in 1660, Milton was discharged from office. All his famous pamphlets were burnt by the hangman. But the poet's militant spirit was not crushed. He and his family moved to a small house not far from London, and Milton again began to write poetry.

Milton's years of retirement became **the third period** in his literary work. During this period he created works that made him one of the greatest poets of England. These were his great epic "Paradise Lost", completed by 1667, and then, the second epic "Paradise Regained" and a tragedy, "Samson Agonistes [ˈæɡouˈnɪstɪz]", both written by 1671.

The story of "Samson" is taken from the Bible. Samson, the great hero, is imprisoned and blinded, but manages to destroy his enemies, although he perishes himself. The tragedy is autobiographical: in it

John Milton

(1608—1674)



His Life and Work

The great poet John Milton was born in London on December 9, 1608. Milton's father was a prosperous scrivener (a clerk who copied documents) in London. He was also an amateur composer.

From childhood Milton learned to love music and books; he read and studied so intensely that at the age of twelve he had already formed the habit of working until midnight.

At first Milton attended St. Paul's School. His progress in every department of knowledge was very rapid, and at the age of sixteen he went to the University of Cambridge. On graduating, Milton retired to his father's country place, Horton, in Buckinghamshire [ˈbʌkɪŋəmʃɪə]. There he gave himself up to study and poetry.

Many of Milton's poems were written at Horton. These comprise **the first period** in his creative work.

Milton had long wished to complete his education by travelling, as was the custom of the time. In 1637 he left England for a European tour. He visited France and Italy, which gave him an opportunity

Who now is sovran¹ can dispose and bid
 What shall be right: farthest from Him is best,
 Whom reason hath equalled, force hath made supreme
 Above his equals. Farewell, happy fields,
 Where joy forever dwells! Hail, horrors! hail,
 Infernal world! and thou, profoundest Hell,
 Receive thy new possessor — one who brings
 A mind not to be changed by place or time.
 The mind is its own place, and in itself
 Can make a Heaven of Hell, a Hell of Heaven.
 What matter where, if I be still the same,
 And what I should be, all but less than he
 Whom thunder hath made greater? Here at least
 We shall be free; the Almighty hath not built
 Here for his envy, will not drive us hence:
 Here we may reign secure; and, in my choice,
 To reign is worth ambition, though in Hell:
 Better to reign in Hell than serve in Heaven."

(Book I)

Adam and Eve are allowed by God to live in Paradise, in the Garden of Eden, as long as they do not eat the apple that grows on the Tree of the Knowledge of good and evil. Satan, who has been driven from the Garden of Eden by the guardian angels, returns at night in the form of a serpent. Next morning, the serpent persuades Eve to eat the forbidden fruit from the Tree of Knowledge and to take another one for Adam. Eve tells Adam what she has done.

Speechless he stood and pale, till thus at length
 First to himself he inward silence broke: —

"O, fairest of Creation, last and best
 Of all God's works, creature in whom excelled
 Whatever can to sight or thought be formed,²
 Holy, divine, amiable or sweet!
 How art thou lost!

. Some cursed fraud
 Of enemy hath beguiled³ thee, yet unknown,
 And me with thee hath ruined; for with thee
 Certain my resolution is to die.

¹ sovran (*old spelling*) — sovereign, king.

² in whom nothing that can be seen or imagined can be surpassed.

³ beguile [bi'gaɪl] — deceive,

Milton shows that he remained faithful to his ideals. It is considered his most powerful work.

Milton died on November 8, 1674 and was buried in London. Milton's works form a bridge between the poetry of the Renaissance and the poetry of the classicists of a later period. Milton was attracted by ancient poetry because of the free thought there expressed and because of its great epic forms. Although poetry was discouraged by the Puritans, he was nevertheless a champion of the Puritans in so far as social and religious problems were concerned, because he believed that only a republican government could provide a foundation for freedom.

Milton's works are characterized by their duality (which means that two independent views go together). He chose his themes from the Bible, but under his treatment they became revolutionary in spirit.

"PARADISE LOST"

"Paradise Lost" was written after the Restoration, but the powerful voice of the poet declared that the spirit of the Revolution was not broken, that it still lived in the hearts of the people. Being a Puritan, Milton wanted to portray God as an almighty embodiment of Justice, and Satan as the villain, but Satan becomes the hero of this great work.

"Paradise Lost" is an epic poem. The characters are Satan and his rebel-angels, God, three guardian angels — Raphael, Gabriel and Michael, and the first man and woman — Adam and Eve [i:v]. The revolutionary spirit is shown in Satan, who revolts against God, draws to his side many rebel-angels and is driven out of Heaven. Down into the fires of Hell they fall. But Satan is not to be overcome. He hates God who rules the universe autocratically:

High on a throne of royal state,
Sole ¹ reigning, holds the tyranny of Heaven.

The very word "tyranny" makes God a despot and repulsive to the free mind. Though banished from Heaven, Satan is glad to have gained freedom. He pities the rebel-angels who have lost life in Heaven for his sake, and decides to go on with the war against God.

"Is this the region, this the soil, the clime," ²
Said then the lost Archangel, "this the seat
That we must change for Heaven? — this mournful gloom
For that celestial light? Be it so, since He

¹ sole — alone, autocratically.

² clime (*poetic*) — region

6. Did Milton share the ideas of the Puritans regarding poetry?
7. Enumerate Milton's chief works.
8. Wherein lies the duality in Milton's literary works?

Tasks:

1. Tell the story of "Paradise Lost".
2. Explain in what way Milton intended to depict the characters of God and Satan, and how they came out in the work.
3. Describe Satan's rebellious character. Why did he hate God? What makes him pity the rebel-angels?
4. Speak about Milton's humanism as shown in his characterization of Adam and Eve. Compare them with Adam and Eve, the sinners in the conventional Bible story. What makes all the difference?

Review Questions

1. What was the leading form of literature during the Bourgeois Revolution in England? Give reasons for your answer.
2. What was Milton's literary work during the Revolution and directly after?
3. What made Milton return to poetry?
4. Why is "Paradise Lost" the greatest work reflecting the Revolution in English literature? How does Milton express revolutionary ideas in this work?

How can I live without thee? how forgo¹
Thy sweet converse and love so dearly joined,
To live again in these wild woods forlorn?"

(Book IX)

Adam decides to eat the fruit for love of Eve. As a punishment, God banishes Adam and Eve to the newly created world, where they have to face a life of toil and woe. The angel Michael drives them out of Paradise, waving his fiery sword. From a hill Michael shows Adam a vision of the tyranny and lawlessness which are to befall mankind.

Milton's sympathies lie with Adam and Eve, and this shows his faith in man. His Adam and Eve are full of energy. They love each other and are ready to meet whatever the earth has in store for them.

When they are driven out of Eden, Eve says to Adam:

" but now lead on;
In me is no delay; with thee to go
Is to stay here; without thee to stay
Is to go hence unwillingly; thou to me
Art all things under Heaven, all places thou,
Who for my wilful crime art² banished hence."

(Book XII)

The revolutionary poets of the 19th century said that in "Paradise Lost" Milton refused to accept the conventional Bible story. Adam and Eve are Man and Woman — the finest of all earthly creatures.

Exercises

Questions:

1. What were the two struggling parties during the Bourgeois Revolution in England, and what class interests were concealed behind each of the parties?
2. How long did the Republic last and what political order marked the end of the whole revolutionary epoch of the 17th century in England?
3. Comment on Milton's education in his native country and on his travels abroad.
4. What was Milton's work during the Bourgeois Revolution?
5. What made Milton become a champion of the Puritan Revolutionaries?

¹ how (can I) forgo — how (can I) do without.

² art (old form 2nd person singular) — are.

V. The Enlightenment

Historical Background. The history of England in the second half of the 17th century and during all of the 18th century was marked by British colonial expansion and the struggle for the leading role in commerce. The most active sections of the population at the time were the commercial classes, that is the middle classes. They hated prejudice and lived by common sense; it was a sound-thinking and rational age.

The writers and philosophers of this age, reflecting the ideology of the middle class, protested against the survivals of feudalism, in which they saw the main evils of the time. They could not yet see the contradictions that were to arise within the capitalist system. Man, they thought, was virtuous by nature and vice was due to ignorance only; so they started a public movement for enlightening the people. The enlighteners wanted to bring knowledge, that is "light" to the people. To their understanding this would do away with all the evils of society, and social harmony would be achieved. This movement was called the Enlightenment. Since the enlighteners believed in the power of reason, the period was also called the Age of Reason.

The movement of the Enlightenment spread later to the Continent. The characteristic features of this movement all over Europe were much the same:

- a) a deep hatred of feudalism and its survivals; the enlighteners rejected Church dogmas and caste distinctions;
- b) a love of freedom, a desire for systematic education for all, a firm belief in human virtue and reason;
- c) a concern for the fate of the common people and of the peasants in particular.

Notwithstanding these common features there was a difference between the ideas expressed by the English enlighteners and those expressed by the French. The French Enlightenment was more progressive than the English: the French enlighteners were political leaders and set forth sharp political problems which prepared the French

"A man should never be ashamed to own he has been in the wrong, which is but saying, in other words, that he is wiser today than he was yesterday."

SWIFT





An eighteenth-century coffee-house — the meeting place of men of letters.

the novel. Poetry and the heroic age of Shakespeare gave way to the prose age of the essayists and novelists. The prose style became clear, graceful and polished. The poets of the period did not deal with strong human passions, they were more interested in the problems of everyday life, and discussed things in verse.

b) The hero of the novel was no longer a prince but a representative of the middle class. This had never taken place before: so far, the common people had usually been depicted as comic characters. They were considered incapable of rousing admiration or tragic compassion.

c) Literature became very instructive: Problems of good and evil were set forth. Writers tried to teach their readers what was good and what was bad from their own points of view. They mostly attacked the vices of the aristocracy and many of them praised the virtues of the then progressive bourgeois class.

The literature of the age of the Enlightenment may be divided into three periods:

The first period lasted from the "Glorious Revolution" (1688—1689) till the end of the seventeen thirties. It is characterized by classicism in poetry. The greatest follower of the classic style was Alexander Pope. Alongside with this high style there appeared new prose literature, the essays of Steele and Addison and the first realistic novels written by Defoe [dr'foul] and Swift.¹ Most of the writers of this time

¹ For Defoe and Swift see pages 142 and 150.

people for the coming revolution; whereas the English Enlightenment had no revolutionary aims in view; the English Bourgeois Revolution was over long before the Enlightenment spread in England. Hence its restricted character.

THE LITERATURE OF THE PERIOD

This period saw a remarkable rise in literature. People wrote on many subjects and made great contributions in the fields of philosophy, history, natural sciences and the new science of political economy.

Writers widely accepted those literary forms, in particular prose forms, which were understandable to the people as a whole.

Contact between writer and democratic reader was established by Joseph Addison and Richard Steele,¹ the famous English essayists who started and directed several magazines, for which they wrote pamphlets and essays.² In 1709 Steele issued a magazine, "The Tatler"; it was followed by others: "The Spectator" (1711), "The Guardian" (1713), and "The Englishman" (1713). In the latter political problems were discussed.

Periodical newspapers, which had been published since the Civil War and now had daily issues, also helped to spread information among the general public.

Copies of current newspapers were kept in the coffee-houses. The latter came into being as soon as coffee, chocolate, and tea were introduced as common drinks. Many people went there regularly to learn the latest news, and the coffee-houses eventually became centres of political and literary discussion. The number of coffee-houses and their role in influencing public opinion increased during the 18th century, and they became practically the second home of the intellectual Londoner. Each rank and profession, each shade of religious and political opinion had its own coffee-house. Men of letters and the wits criticized the latest literary works and discussed political problems there. University students, translators, printers and other people crowded in to join the discussion.

English literature of the period may be characterized by the following features:

a) As we have already said, the period saw the rise of the political pamphlet and essay, but the leading genre of the Enlightenment became

¹ Joseph Addison ['dʒouzɪf 'ædɪsn] (1672—1719); Richard Steele (1672—1729).

² An essay is a composition of moderate length on any subject, usually written in prose. The writer does not go into details, but deals in an easy manner with the chosen subject, and expresses his personal opinion with regard to it.

Exercises

1. Give a short account of the historical background of the age of the Enlightenment in England.
 - 1) Why is the period called the "Enlightenment"?
 - 2) What evils did the enlighteners want to do away with?
 - 3) In what way did they try to better the world?
 - 4) Explain what you think is meant by the sentence: "The enlighteners wanted to bring 'light' to the people".
 - 5) Compare the English period of the Enlightenment with the French one. Which of them was more progressive and why? Give your reason.
2. Name the most prominent French enlighteners.
3. What were the most characteristic features of the literature of the Enlightenment?
 - 1) What new literary forms appeared?
 - 2) Why do we say that the literature of the period was intended to be instructive?
 - 3) Speak about the new type of hero.
4. Who was the greatest English classicist?

wrote political pamphlets, but the ablest came from the pens of Defoe and Swift.

The second period of the Enlightenment was the most mature period. It embraces the forties and the fifties of the 18th century. It saw the development of the realistic social novel represented by Richardson, Fielding and Smollett.¹

The third period refers to the last decades of the century. It is marked by the appearance of a new trend: Sentimentalism, typified by the works of Goldsmith and Sterne.² This period also saw the rise of the realistic drama (Sheridan)³ and the revival of poetry.

Alexander Pope (1688—1744). Pope was an English classicist. He developed a taste for the art of ancient Greece and Rome. Classical forms suited the age, which tried to bring everything under the control of reason. The simplicity, proportion, and restrained emotion of the ancient Greek and Roman writers appealed to the English classicists. In 1715 Pope published part of his translations of the “Iliad [ˈɪliəd]” and the “Odyssey [ˈɒdɪsi]” of Homer,⁴ which brought him fame.

Pope deals with the favourite subject of vice and virtue in his famous poem “An Essay on Man”, in which he analyses the powers and weaknesses of man. He believed that the perverse nature of man was imaginary rather than real. Each thing in the world was in harmony with others. He refused to see the contradictions that arose after the Revolution of 1688 and was later criticized by those writers who were not satisfied with the results of the Revolution.

Pope had a delicate sense of style which he polished to the highest degree.

Pope organized a society of literary men who called themselves the “Martin Scriblerus’s [ˈskrɪblərəsɪz] Club”. Swift numbered among its members. Martin Scriblerus was an imaginary personage: anyone who wished to publish a satire in a magazine was allowed to use the pseudonym Martin Scriblerus. Pope hoped that when put together these articles would make an interesting book; but they remained isolated compositions. Yet it was the Martin Scriblerus’s Club that inspired Swift to write the famous novel “Gulliver’s Travels”.

¹ Samuel Richardson [ˈsæmjʊəl ˈrɪtʃədn] (1689—1761), see also pages 167 and 173; For Fielding see page 168; Tobias Smollett [təˈbərəs ˈsmɒlt] (1721—1771).

² Oliver [ˈɒlvə] Goldsmith (1730?—1774); Laurence Sterne [ˈlɔərəns ˈstɜːn] (1713—1768).

³ Richard Brinsley Sheridan [ˈrɪtʃəd ˈbrɪnzli ˈʃerɪdn] (1751—1816).

⁴ These wonderful Greek poems are about the siege of Troy, the ten years’ war between the Greeks and Trojans, and the wanderings of Odysseus [əˈdɪsjuːs].

When Defoe was about twenty-three, he started writing pamphlets on questions of the hour.

When the Protestant king, William III, was placed on the throne (1689), Defoe started writing pamphlets praising his policy. This was the beginning of Defoe's literary career. In his "Essay on Projects" Defoe anticipated the greatest public improvements of modern times: higher education for women, the protection of seamen, the construction of highways, and the opening of savings-banks. He urged the establishment of a special academy to study literature and languages.

Owing to the fact that William III was supported by the Whig party, he was continually attacked by the Tories, who called him Dutch William. Some Tories attacked him in a satirical poem "The Foreigners", in which they declared that the English race should be kept pure. Contending against this idea, Defoe wrote a satire in verse, "The True-born Englishman" (1701), in which he proved that true-born Englishmen do not exist, since the English nation consists of Anglo-Saxons, Danes, Normans, and others. He said: "A true-born Englishman is a contradiction in speech, an irony; in fact, a fiction." Defoe was thanked by the king for this pamphlet.

During the reign of Queen Anne (1702—1714), persecution of the Dissenters began again, as in the reign of James II. Defoe wrote a pamphlet in defence of the Dissenters, entitled "The Shortest Way with the Dissenters" (1702), in which he attacked the Tories and the established Church. But the irony was so subtle that the enemy did not understand it at first: they believed Defoe when he said that the Dissenters should be "captured and tortured and burnt". They admired the pamphlet and considered it to be next best to the Bible. But as soon as they realized the real character of the pamphlet, Defoe was sentenced to seven years' imprisonment, and, in order to disgrace him, the Tories subjected him to a cruel punishment: he had to stand in the pillory on a public square with his hands and head in stocks. Before this he had written his "Hymn to the Pillory", in which he criticized the law and demanded a fair trial. The Hymn was not published, but his friends made it popular, and it had tremendous success with the people. It was sung in the streets on the day Defoe was put in the pillory. People gathered round him and cheered him while he stood there, women threw flowers to him, and when the time came for him to be set free, people carried him from the square on their shoulders. This was the climax of his political career and the end of it.

Later, he became editor of a magazine which supported his former enemies, the Tories. Defoe, like many other journalists of the day, served the Tories as well as the Whigs. This should not be accepted as a change of principle: though party strife was very bitter, there were no

Daniel Defoe

(1661—1731)



His Life and Work

Daniel Defoe [ˈdænjəl drˈfou], the founder of the early bourgeois realistic novel, was first and foremost a journalist, and in many ways, the father of modern English periodicals. "The Review" which he founded in 1704 and conducted until 1713, is regarded as the first English newspaper. It paved the way for the magazines "The Tatler" and "The Spectator".

Daniel Defoe was born in London in a family of nonconformists (Dissenters).¹ His father, a butcher, was wealthy enough to give his son a good education. Daniel was to become a minister (a priest) in the Nonconformist Church, but when his training was completed, he decided to engage in business as a hosier. It was his cherished desire to become wealthy, but his wish was never fulfilled. Defoe went bankrupt several times. He was always deep in debt. "Thirty times I was rich and poor," he used to say. The only branch of business in which he proved successful was journalism and literature.

¹ Those who refuse to accept the doctrines of an established or national Church, especially those Protestants who dissent from the Church of England.

Evil.

"I am cast upon a horrible, desolate island, void of all hope of recovery.

I am singled out and separated, as it were, from all the world, to be miserable.

I am divided from mankind — a solitaire;¹ one banished from human society.

I have not clothes to cover me.

I am without any defence, or means to resist any violence of man or beast.

I have no soul to speak to, or relieve me.

Robinson Crusoe's most characteristic trait is his optimism. His guiding principle in life became "never say die" and "in trouble to be troubled is to have your troubles doubled". Sometimes of course, especially during earthquakes or when he was ill, panic and anxiety overtook him, but never for long. He has confidence in himself and in man, and believes it is within the power of man to overcome all difficulties and hardships. Another of Crusoe's good qualities which saves him from despair, is his ability to put his whole heart into everything he does. He is an enthusiastic worker and always hopes for the best.

Good.

But I am alive; and not drowned, as all my ship's company were.

But I am singled out, too, from all the ship's crew, to be spared from death; and He that miraculously saved me from death can deliver me from this condition.

But I am not starved and perishing on a barren place, affording no sustenance.²

But I am in a hot climate, where if I had clothes, I could hardly wear them.

But I am cast on an island, where I see no wild beasts to hurt me, as I saw on the coast of Africa; and what if I had been shipwrecked there?

But God wonderfully sent the ship in near enough to the shore, that I have gotten out so many necessary things as will either supply my wants, or enable me to supply myself, even as long as I live."

a solitaire ['sɒlɪtəri] — one without companions.
sustenance ['sʌstɪnəns] — food.

serious contradictions between the two parties at that time. When the Whigs came to power after the death of Queen Anne, Defoe began to serve the Whigs again.

In 1719, he tried his hand at another kind of literature — fiction, and wrote the novel he is now best known by, “The Life and Adventures of Robinson Crusoe [ˈrɒbmɪsn̩ ˈkruːsɒl]”. After the book was published, Defoe became famous and rich and was able to pay his creditors in full. Now he wrote for four public magazines and received a regular sum of money from the government.

Other novels which Defoe wrote were also very much talked about during his lifetime, but we do not hear much about them now. Defoe published “The Life of Captain Singleton” in 1720, “The Fortunes and Misfortunes of Moll Flanders” in 1721, “The History of Colonel Jack” in 1722, and “A History of the Lady Roxana” in 1724.

In 1729, while at work on a book which was to be entitled “The Complete English Gentleman”, Defoe fell ill and in two years’ time he died.

“ROBINSON CRUSOE”

Books about voyages and new discoveries were exceedingly popular in the first quarter of the 18th century. A true story that was described in one of Steele’s magazines, “The Englishman”, attracted Defoe’s attention. It was about Alexander Selkirk [ˈsɛlkəːk], a Scottish sailor, who had quarrelled with his captain and was put ashore on a desert island near South America where he lived quite alone for four years and four months. In 1709 he was picked up by a passing vessel. Selkirk’s story interested Defoe so much that he decided to use it for a book. However, he made his hero, Robinson Crusoe, spend twenty-six years on a desert island.

At the beginning of the story the hero is an inexperienced youth, a rather light-minded boy, who develops into a strong-willed man, able to withstand all the calamities of his unusual destiny. Being cast ashore on a desert island after the shipwreck, alone and defenceless, Crusoe tried to be reasonable in order to master his despondency (loss of hope and courage). He knew that he must not give way to self-pity or fear, or to lose himself in mourning for his lost companions.

“[...] as my reason began now to master my despondency, I began to comfort myself as well as I could, and to set the good against the evil, that I might have something to distinguish my case from worse, and I stated it very impartially, like debtor and creditor, the comfort I enjoyed, against the miseries I suffered, thus:

Negro slavery seems natural to Defoe, as it was to his age. Crusoe considers his race to be superior to all other races. As soon as a man appears on the island Crusoe makes him his slave. "Master" is the first word he teaches Friday to say. When Crusoe was alone on the island he did everything with his own hands. Then Friday appears, and he immediately makes a servant of him, and when the island becomes inhabited by other people, he organizes a colony and introduces class relations: the masters, who rule the community, and the slaves, who do the work. Crusoe was fond of Xury, the boy who helped him to escape from slavery, but when in need of money he did not hesitate to sell him.

Crusoe is full of religious superstitions. At the thought that a terrible dream he has had might come true, he is terrified. He believes in God and in the hand of Providence. In desperate moments he turns to God for help.

"[...] Prayed to God again, but was light-headed; and when I was not, I was so ignorant that I knew not what to say; only I lay and cried, 'Lord, look upon me! Lord, pity me! Lord, have mercy upon me!'"

Friday. The other central character of the book is the man Friday. Defoe makes the reader sympathize with Friday. Friday is intelligent, brave, generous, and skilful. He performs all his tasks well. Crusoe teaches him to speak English and is astonished how quickly the man begins to understand the language. It is to Defoe's credit that he portrays the savage as an able, kind-hearted human being at a time when coloured people were treated very badly and were regarded only as a "ready mercantile commodity" (that is to say, a profitable article for trade).

Defoe's Individualism

The novel "Robinson Crusoe" is a glorification of practicalness and energy, yet, when concentrated in an individual man, these qualities are exaggerated. According to Defoe, it follows that man can live by himself comfortably and make all the things he needs with no other humans, no other hands to assist him. This individualism is characteristic of Defoe, who fails to see that Crusoe succeeds in making most of the things he possessed only thanks to some tools he found on the ship, tools made by many other people. Besides, he possessed certain experience that he could only have had as a representative of the 18th century, that is to say, he had inherited the experience of the many generations who had lived on the earth before him.

He began to keep a journal of his life as soon as he got a pen and ink to write with. This too is a sign of Crusoe's courageous optimism.

THE JOURNAL

"September 30, 1659. — I, poor miserable Robinson Crusoe, being shipwrecked during a dreadful storm in the offing,¹ came on shore on this dismal, unfortunate island, which I called 'The Island of Despair'; all the rest of the ship's company being drowned, and myself almost dead.

All the rest of the day I spent in afflicting myself² at the dismal circumstances I was brought to, viz.,³ I had neither food, house, clothes, weapon, nor place to fly to; and in despair of any relief, saw nothing but death before me; either that I should be devoured by wild beasts, murdered by savages, or starved to death for want of food. At the approach of night I slept in a tree, for fear of wild creatures; but slept soundly, though it rained all night. [...]

January 3. — I began my fence, or wall; which, being still jealous of my being attacked by somebody, I resolved to make very thick and strong. [...]

All this time I worked very hard, the rains hindering me many days, nay, sometimes weeks together; but I thought I should never be perfectly secure till this wall was finished; and it is scarce credible what inexpressible labour everything was done with, especially the bringing piles out of the woods, and driving them into the ground; for I made them much bigger than I needed to have done. [...]"

Defoe's Crusoe, like Defoe himself, is typically bourgeois. He is very practical. The beauty of the island has no appeal to him. He does not care for scenery. He regards the island as his personal property. He takes pride in being master of it, and is pleased at the thought that everything he sees around belongs to him. This is also proved by the fact that he decided to keep the money he found in the ship, although he knew that it would be of no use to him on the island.

"I smiled to myself at the sight of this money. 'Oh, drug!' said I aloud, 'what art thou good for? Thou art not worth to me — no, not the taking off the ground; one of those knives is worth all this heap; I have no manner of use for thee; even remain where thou art, and go to the bottom, as a creature whose life is not worth saving.' However, upon second thoughts, I took it away; and wrapping all in a piece of canvas, I began to think of making another raft [...]."

¹ in the offing — not far from the land.

² in afflicting myself — in bringing mental suffering on myself.

³ viz. — namely, in other words.

Defoe's Contribution to Literature

The novel "Robinson Crusoe" has become a tale of universal appeal, for the writer was fortunate enough to hit upon a theme that stirs the imagination of people of all ages and all times. The work is a glorification of human labour, a triumph of man over nature. It is not only a work of fiction, an account of adventures, a biography; it is a study of man, a great work showing man in relation to nature and civilization as well as in relation to labour and private property.

Defoe was a true writer of the Enlightenment. Breaking through the outworn convention he introduced the common man as the key-character of his novel. Defoe uses the manner of speech of the common people to whom he addresses himself.

The purpose of the author was to make his stories so lifelike that the reader's attention would be fixed only on the events. This is achieved by telling the story in the first person and by paying careful attention to concrete details. This produces the impression that the author himself had lived through all the adventures described by him.

There was no writer of the age who appealed to so wide a circle of readers as Defoe, — he appealed to all, in fact, who were able to read.

Exercises

1. Tell the story of Daniel Defoe's life.
2. What suggested the idea for the novel "Robinson Crusoe" to Defoe?
3. What is the main theme of the novel?
4. Speak about the characteristic features of Robinson Crusoe.
5. What helped Robinson to withstand all the calamities of his unusual destiny?
6. Do you think it is possible for a man to spend twenty-six years on a desert island?
7. Why do we say that the way Defoe portrays Friday's character does him credit?
8. What makes the novel realistic?



Robinson Crusoe and Friday.

supporters of James II. He sailed over to England and, after many years, once again saw his mother in Leicester. With her help he became private secretary and account-keeper to Sir William Temple, on the latter's estate at Moor Park, not far from London. Sir William was a retired diplomat and also a writer.

An English historian, who described Sir William Temple as a narrow-minded selfish man, said, "Little did Temple imagine that the coarse exterior of his dependant¹ concealed a genius equally suited to politics and to letters, a genius destined to shake great kingdoms, to stir the laughter and the rage of millions, and to leave to posterity memorials which can perish only with the English language."

At Moor Park Swift made friends with Hester Johnson, the daughter of the housekeeper. He taught the little girl English spelling and gave her advice in reading. This friendship lasted all his life. Hester became the Stella of Swift's famous work "Journal to Stella".

Having improved his education at Moor Park by taking advantage of Sir William's library, Swift went to Oxford and took his Master of Arts degree in 1692. A recommendation from his patron helped him to get the place of vicar at a little parish church in Ireland, where he remained for a year and a half. He wrote much and burnt most of what he wrote. Soon he grew tired of the lonely life in Ireland and was glad to accept Sir William Temple's proposal that he should return to Moor Park, where he continued to live and work until his patron's death in 1699.

At the end of the 17th century a discussion as to whether or not the works of ancient writers were superior to those of the moderns, which had started in France, spread to England. Ancient philosophers and poets were compared to the modern authors of the day, and each side strove to prove that the one or the other was superior. It goes without saying that this stupid controversy turned into farce, as even ignorant people joined in the discussion. One such vain person was Sir William Temple. In 1692 he published an "Essay on Ancient and Modern Learning" in which he praised the ancients. Immediately his opponents, the scholars Bentley and Wotton, published a book in reply ridiculing Temple's ignorance. Swift wished to help his patron out of the awkward situation, in which he found himself, and wrote a satire "The Battle of the Books". The story is in the form of an allegory. Swift pretends to have come upon an old manuscript, which he decides to publish. The manuscript tells of an incident that took place in St. James's Library. The librarian is Bentley, Sir William's opponent. He has given the

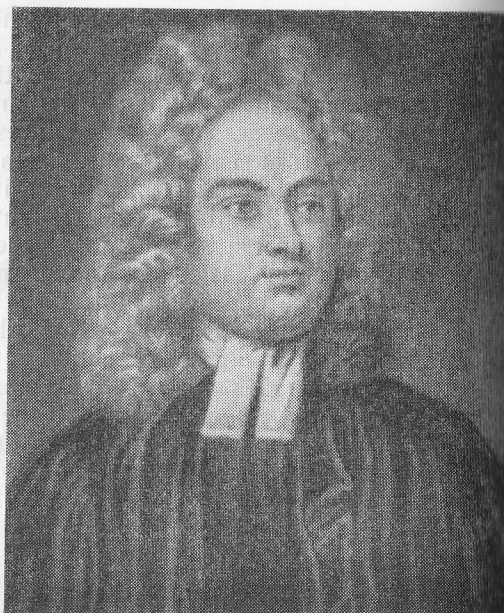
¹ the coarse exterior of his dependant — the unpolished looks of his dependant.
(By dependant the historian means Swift.)

Jonathan Swift

(1667—1745)

"As fierce a beak and talon as
ever struck, as strong a wing
as ever beat, belong to Swift."

THACKERAY



His Life and Work

Jonathan Swift was the greatest of English satirists. His bitter satire was aimed at the contemporary social order in general, and at the policy of the English bourgeoisie towards the Irish in particular. That is why the Irish people considered Swift their champion in the struggle for the welfare and freedom of their country.

Jonathan Swift was born in Dublin, but he came from an English family. The writer's father, supervisor at the court buildings of Dublin, died at the age of twenty-five, leaving his wife and daughter penniless. His son was born seven months after his death, on November 30, 1667. He was named Jonathan after his late father.

The boy knew little of his mother's care: she had to go back to her native town of Leicester ['lestə] and Jonathan hardly ever saw her during his childhood. He was supported by his uncle Godwin.

At the age of six he was sent to Kilkenny School, which he left at fourteen. Then he entered Trinity College in Dublin and got his Bachelor's degree in 1686.

The Revolution of 1688 was followed by an uprising in Ireland, and Swift, being English, narrowly escaped the vengeance of the Irish.

policy of England, intending thus to help the common people. "Drapier's [ˈdɹeɪpɪəz] Letters" (a series of letters under the signature of "M. B. Drapier") were directed against the English government for their treatment of Ireland, and particularly for allowing a certain William Wood (a speculator) to make worthless copper money for circulation in Ireland. Swift roused the public feeling so effectually that the project was given up. This pamphlet and others made Swift so popular among the Irish people that he is said to have possessed more real influence over them than the highest of constituted authorities.

In 1726 Swift's masterpiece "Gulliver's [ˈɡʌlɪvəz] Travels" appeared. Swift's inventive genius and biting satire were at their best in this work, which made a great sensation.

In 1728 Stella died after a long illness. This loss affected Swift so deeply that some of his biographers say he was never the same man again.

Conditions in Ireland between 1700 and 1750 were such as no English historian would have ventured to depict. Famine had depopulated whole regions. Travellers described how their way lay through districts covered with unburied corpses. All this worked like poison in Swift's blood. He wrote the pamphlets: "The Present Miserable State of Ireland" and "A Modest Proposal for Preventing the Children of Poor People from Being a Burden to Their Parents or the Country..." and other pamphlets. "A Modest Proposal, etc." is a biting satire on those who caused the poverty of the Irish population. Swift pretends to propose that parents of large families should kill their children and sell the meat in the market so as to escape starvation and do away with the surplus population.

Hard work and continuous disappointments in life undermined Swift's health. By the end of 1731 his mind was failing rapidly. In 1740 his memory and reason were gone and he became completely deaf. He died on the 19th of October, 1745, in Dublin.

"GULLIVER'S TRAVELS"

In "Gulliver's Travels" Swift satirized the evils of the existing society in the form of fictitious travels. The scenes and nations described in the book are so extraordinary and amusing, that the novel is as great a favourite with children as with adults. It tells of the adventures of a ship's surgeon, as related by himself, and is divided into four parts, or four voyages.

books of modern writers the best place on the shelves, and has thrown the volumes of ancient works aside. The books of the ancient authors strive to get back their own, and make war on the moderns. Amidst a cloud of dust the two armies (the army of the ancients and the army of the moderns) engage in a battle. Swift did not want to take either side, that's why he does not tell his readers who won the battle. He drops the narrative pretending to have lost the end of the manuscript. Though written in 1697 the satire remained unpublished until 1704 when it was issued with another brilliant work by Swift, "A Tale of a Tub".

The "Tale of a Tub" is an anti-religious satire. The title of the book has a double meaning and explains the idea of the book. 1) "A Tale of a Tub" means a nonsense story told as a joke; 2) In the preface to the book Swift tells his readers of an old custom seamen had when at sea: if a whale began to follow the vessel, they threw an empty tub into the water to divert the whale's attention from the ship.

The empty tub symbolizes religion, which diverts people from the need to fight for their rights, and is useful in controlling the nation. The ship is the symbol of the State.

After the death of Sir William Temple, Swift became vicar again and went to live in a little place called Laracor, in Ireland. He invited Hester Johnson to come to this place. She had by then grown up into a beautiful young woman. It is believed that Swift made a secret marriage with Stella, but much of his private life is unknown to us.

At Laracor Swift kept an eye on the political events of London. Party strife reached its climax in 1702 when the Whigs were preparing for a war called the "War of the Spanish Succession". Swift wrote a political pamphlet in defence of the Whig policy, which at that time was thought by most Englishmen to be for the good of the country. Some of the Whig leaders who had met Swift at Moor Park asked him to come to London. London brought him into the labyrinth of contemporary events, which became the chief passion of his life. Swift often went to the coffee-houses where he talked with the journalists and with the common people. His contributions to "The Tatler", "The Spectator" and other magazines show how well he understood the spirit of the time. Swift's conversations with the leaders of the English political parties are described in a series of letters he wrote to Stella ("Journal to Stella").

In 1713 Swift was made Dean of St. Patrick's Cathedral in Dublin. While in Ireland this time, he came into contact with the common people and saw the miserable conditions in which the population lived. The expenses of the wars for new British colonies were a heavy burden on the people of Ireland. Swift wrote pamphlets criticizing the colonial

A VOYAGE TO LILLIPUT

This part is about Gulliver's adventures in Lilliput [ˈlɪlɪpʊt]. After being shipwrecked, Gulliver gets safely ashore and finds himself in a strange country inhabited by a race of people about six inches high. Everything else is on a corresponding scale. By making them so small Swift stresses their insignificance, and makes the reader despise them as petty creatures and feel contempt for their ideas, customs, and institutions. Swift mocks at their Emperor, who boasts that he is the delight of the universe while, as a matter of fact, he is no taller than a nail.

It is easy enough to understand that Swift meant this small country with its shallow interests, corrupt laws and evil customs to symbolize the England of the 18th century; the government ("a great office"), the court with its atmosphere of hostility, hypocrisy and flattery, where the author felt as lonely as his hero when among the Lilliputians [ˌlɪlɪˈpjuːʃjənz], and religious controversy.

Swift compares the courtiers with rope-dancers: those who can jump the highest get the highest office.

"[...] The Emperor had a mind, one day, to entertain me with one of the country shows, wherein they exceed all nations I have known, both for dexterity and magnificence. I was diverted with none so much as that of the rope-dancers, performed upon a slender white thread, extended about two feet, and twelve inches from the ground. Upon which I shall desire liberty, with the reader's patience, to enlarge a little.

"This diversion is only practised by those persons who are candidates for great employments and high favour at court. They are trained in this art from their youth, and are not always of noble birth or liberal education. When a great office is vacant, either by death or disgrace (which often happens), five or six of those candidates petition the Emperor to entertain his Majesty and the court with a dance on the rope, and whoever jumps the highest, without falling, succeeds in the office. Very often the chief ministers themselves are commanded to show their skill, and to convince the Emperor that they have not lost their faculty. Flimnap,¹ the treasurer, is allowed to cut a caper² on the straight rope, at least an inch higher than any other lord in the whole empire. I have seen him do the summersault several times together upon a trencher,³ fixed on a rope, which is no thicker than

¹ Under this name the Prime Minister of George I, Sir Robert Walpole, is meant.

² to cut a caper — to jump playfully.

³ a trencher — a large wooden plate.



Gulliver in Lilliput.

a common pack-thread in England. My friend Reldresal, principal secretary for private affairs, is, in my opinion, if I am not partial, the second after the treasurer; the rest of the great officers are much upon a par.¹

"These diversions are often attended with fatal accidents, whereof great numbers are on record. I myself have seen two or three candidates break a limb. But the danger is much greater when the ministers themselves are commanded to show their dexterity; for, by contending to excel themselves and their fellows, they strain so far that there is hardly one of them who hath not received a fall, and some of them two or three. I was assured that a year or two before my arrival, Flimnap would have infallibly broke² his neck, if one of the King's cushions, that accidentally lay on the ground, had not weakened the force of his fall."

(Chapter III)

¹ much upon a par — more or less equal.

² broke = broken.

observe; and particularly, that his Majesty's imperial heels are lower, at least by a *drurr*, than any of his court.¹ (*Drurr* is a measure about the fourteenth part of an inch.) The animosities between these two parties run so high, that they will neither eat nor drink nor talk with each other. We compute the Tramecksan, or High Heels, to exceed us in number; but the power is wholly on our side. We apprehend his Imperial Highness, the heir to the crown, to have some tendency towards the High Heels; at least, we can plainly discover that one of his heels is higher than the other, which gives him a hobble in his gait."²

(Chapter IV)

In describing the war between Lilliput and Blefuscu, which was caused by disagreement concerning the manner of breaking eggs, the author satirizes the religious controversy between Catholics and Protestants, their contradictions being as insignificant as those between the Big-endians and Small-endians.

"Now, in the midst of these intestine disquiets, we are threatened with an invasion from the island of Blefuscu, which is the other great empire of the universe, almost as large and powerful as this of his Majesty. [...] Which two mighty powers have, as I was going to tell you, been engaged in a most obstinate war for six-and-thirty moons past. It began upon the following occasion. It is allowed on all hands,³ that the primitive way of breaking eggs, before we eat them, was upon the larger end; but his present Majesty's grandfather, while he was a boy, going to eat an egg, and breaking it according to the ancient practice, happened to cut one of his fingers. Whereupon the Emperor, his father, published an edict, commanding all his subjects, upon great penalties, to break the smaller end of their eggs. The people so highly resented this law, that our histories tell us, there have been six rebellions raised on that account, wherein one Emperor lost his life, and another his crown. These civil commotions were constantly fermented by the monarchs of Blefuscu; and when they were quelled, the exiles always fled for refuge to that empire.⁴ It is computed, that eleven thousand persons have, at several times, suffered death, rather than submit to break their eggs at the smaller end. Many hundred large volumes have been published upon this controversy [...]. Now, the

¹ The preference of George I for the Low Heels, or Whigs, is indicated by the exceptional lowness of the Emperor's heels.

² This is a reference to the Prince of Wales, afterwards King George II; he could not decide which party to support and tried to please both.
³ on all hands — everywhere.

⁴ The "Emperor who lost his life" was King Charles I, executed during the English Bourgeois Revolution; the "Emperor who lost his crown" was King James II who fled to France after the "Glorious Revolution".

Courtiers who want to be awarded with a prize must undergo a special test, "a trial of dexterity", — they have to leap over a stick or creep under it backwards and forwards several times, according as the stick is raised or lowered by the Emperor and the first minister. Swift stresses the fact that it is very difficult for a courtier to please both the king and the minister. Flattery and hypocrisy are the only qualities necessary to work one's way up at the court.

"There is likewise another diversion, which is only shown before the Emperor and Empress, and first minister, upon particular occasions. The Emperor lays on the table three fine silken threads, of six inches long; one is blue, the other red, and the third green.¹ These threads are proposed as prizes for those persons whom the Emperor hath a mind to distinguish by a peculiar mark of his favour. The ceremony is performed in his Majesty's great chamber of state, where the candidates are to undergo a trial of dexterity very different from the former, and such as I have not observed the least resemblance of in any other country of the old or new world. The Emperor holds a stick in his hands, both ends parallel to the horizon, while the candidates advancing one by one, sometimes leap over the stick, sometimes creep under it, backwards and forwards several times, according as the stick is advanced or depressed. Sometimes the Emperor holds one end of the stick, and his first minister the other; sometimes the minister has it entirely to himself. Whoever performs his part with most agility, and holds out the longest in leaping and creeping, is rewarded with the blue-coloured silk; the red is given to the next, and the green to the third, which they all wear girt twice round about the middle and you see few great persons round about this court who are not adorned with one of these girdles."

(Chapter III)

Tramecksan and Slamecksan, the two political parties which differed only in the size of their heels, were invented by Swift to ridicule the Whigs and the Tories who were always at loggerheads, though their political aims were almost the same.

"[...] for above seventy moons past, there have been two struggling parties in this empire, under the names of Tramecksan and Slamecksan from the high and low heels of their shoes, by which they distinguish themselves. It is alleged, indeed, that the high heels are most agreeable to our ancient constitution; but however this may be, his Majesty hath determined to make use of only low heels in the administration of the government, and all offices in the gift of the crown, as you cannot but

¹ The badges of the three highest Orders of England are meant.



Gulliver and the giants.

that ignorance, idleness, and vice are the proper ingredients for qualifying a legislator [...] I cannot but conclude the bulk of your natives to be the most pernicious race of little odious vermin that Nature ever suffered to crawl upon the surface of the earth.”

(Chapter VI)

Part 3

A VOYAGE TO LAPUTA, BALNIBARBI, LUGGNAGG, GLUBDUBDRIB, AND JAPAN

Describing Gulliver's voyage to Laputa [lə'pju:təl], a flying island, Swift attacks monarchs whose policy brings nothing but suffering to their subjects. The king of Laputa has no consideration for his people, and does not think of them at all, except when he has to collect taxes

Big-endian exiles have found so much credit in the Emperor of Blefuscu's court, and so much private assistance and encouragement from their party here at home, that a bloody war hath been carried on between the two empires for six-and-thirty moons [...]."

(Chapter IV)

Part 2

A VOYAGE TO BROBDINGNAG

Before long Gulliver undertakes another voyage. The ship meets with a terrible storm and anchors near Brobdingnag, the land of the giants, to take in a supply of water. While on shore, Gulliver is captured by the giants. On the whole, they are good-natured creatures and treat Gulliver kindly, though they are amused by his small size and look upon him as a plaything.

Brobdingnag is an expression of Swift's desire to escape from the disgusting world of the Lilliputians and to find the ideal: an agricultural country ruled by an ideal monarch. The author creates such a monarch in the king of Brobdingnag. He is clever, honest, and kind to his people. He hates wars and wants to make his people happy. However, the king's character is not true to life. In this part we don't find the sharp and vivid satirical descriptions so typical of the story of the first voyage. The most interesting episode is Gulliver's conversation with the king, when he tells the king about the war policy of his native land.

"[...] He wondered to hear me talk of such chargeable and expensive wars; that certainly we must be a quarrelsome people, or live among very bad neighbours, and that our generals must needs¹ be richer than our kings. He asked what business we had out of our own islands, unless upon the score of trade or treaty, or to defend the coasts with our fleet. Above all, he was amazed to hear me talk of a mercenary standing army in the midst of peace and among a free people. He said if we were governed by our own consent, in the persons of our representatives, he could not imagine of whom we were afraid, or against whom we were to fight; and would hear my opinion, whether a private man's house might not better be defended by himself, his children, and family, than by half-a-dozen rascals, picked up at a venture in the streets for small wages, who might get a hundred times more by cutting their throats.

"Then the King added: 'My little friend Grildrig, you have made a most admirable panegyric upon your country; you have clearly proved

¹ needs (*old use*) — necessarily.

from them. The flying or floating island — “a phenomenon solved by modern philosophy and astronomy” — helps the king to make the people of his dominions pay taxes and it also helps him to suppress rebellions.

“If any town should engage in rebellion or mutiny, fall into violent factions, or refuse to pay the usual tribute, the King hath two methods of reducing them to obedience. The first and the mildest course is by keeping the island hovering over such a town and the lands about it, whereby he can deprive them of the benefit of the sun and the rain, and consequently afflict the inhabitants with dearth¹ and diseases. And, if the crime deserves it, they are at the same time pelted from above with great stones, against which they have no defence but by creeping into cellars or caves, while the roofs of their houses are beaten to pieces. But if they still continue obstinate, or offer to raise insurrections, he proceeds to the last remedy by letting the island drop directly upon their heads, which makes a universal destruction both of houses and men. However, this is an extremity to which the prince is seldom driven, neither indeed is he willing to put it in execution, nor dare his ministers advise him to an action which, as it would render him odious to the people, so it would be a great damage to their own estates, which lie all below, for the island is the King’s demesne.

“But there is still indeed a more weighty reason why the Kings of this country have been always averse from executing so terrible an action, unless upon the utmost necessity. For if the town intended to be destroyed should have in it any tall rocks [...], or if it abound in high spires, or pillars of stone, a sudden fall might endanger the bottom or under surface of the island [...].”

(Chapter III)

Swift’s indignation and the bitterness of his satire reach their climax when he shows the academy of sciences in Lagado Ilagardoul, the city of the continent of Balnibarbi. The author touches upon all the existing sciences. It is easy enough to understand that in ridiculing the academy, Swift ridicules the scientists of his time, who shut themselves up in their chambers isolated from all the world. The members of the academy are busy inventing such projects as:

- 1) extracting sunbeams out of cucumbers;
- 2) building houses by beginning at the roof and working downwards to the foundation;
- 3) converting ice into gunpowder;
- 4) softening marble for pillows and pin-cushions;

¹ dearth [dæ:θ] — famine.



The academy of sciences.

- 5) petrifying the hoofs of a living horse to preserve it from foundering;
- 6) preventing the growth of wool upon lambs, thus breeding naked sheep all over the kingdom;
- 7) ploughing the ground with hogs;
- 8) dying silk with the help of spiders;
- 9) simplifying the language by cutting polysyllables into monosyllables, and leaving out verbs and participles.

“The first man I saw was of a meagre aspect, with sooty hands and face, his hair and beard long, ragged, and singed in several places. His clothes, shirt, and skin were all of the same colour. He had been eight years upon a project for extracting sunbeams out of cucumbers, which were to be put in vials hermetically sealed, and let out to warm

the air in raw inclement summers. He told me he did not doubt, that in eight years more, he should be able to supply the governor's gardens with sunshine, at a reasonable rate; but he complained that his stock was low, and entreated me to give him something as an encouragement to ingenuity, especially since this had been a very dear season for cucumbers. I made him a small present, for my lord had furnished me with money on purpose, because he knew their practice of begging from all who go to see them. [...]

"There was a most ingenious architect, who had contrived a new method for building houses, by beginning at the roof, and working downwards to the foundation, which he justified to me by the like practice of those two prudent insects, the bee and the spider.

"There was a man born blind, who had several apprentices in his own condition. Their employment was to mix colours for painters, which their master taught them to distinguish, by feeling and smelling. It was, indeed, my misfortune to find them at that time not very perfect in their lessons, and the professor himself happened to be generally mistaken. This artist is much encouraged and esteemed by the whole fraternity.

"In another apartment, I was highly pleased with a projector, who had found a device of ploughing the ground with hogs, to save the charges of ploughs, cattle, and labour."

(Chapter V)

Then Gulliver visits the school of languages:

"We next went to the school of languages, where three professors sat in consultation upon improving that of their own country.

"The first project was to shorten discourse by cutting polysyllables into one, and leaving out verbs and participles; because, in reality, all things imaginable are but nouns.

"The other project was a scheme for entirely abolishing all words whatsoever; and this was urged as a great advantage in point of health, as well as brevity. For it is plain that every word we speak is, in some degree, a diminution of our lungs by corrosion, and consequently contributes to the shortening of our lives. An expedient was therefore offered that, since words are only names for *things*, it would be more convenient for all men to carry about them such *things* as were necessary to express the particular benefits they are to discourse on. And this invention would certainly have taken place, to the great ease as well as health of the subject, if the women, in conjunction with the vulgar and illiterate, had not threatened to raise a rebellion, unless they might be allowed the liberty to speak with their tongues, after the manner of their forefathers; such constant irreconcilable ene-

mies to science are the common people. However, many of the most learned and wise adhere to the new scheme of expressing themselves by *things*, which hath only this inconvenience attending it, that if a man's business be very great and of various kinds, he must be obliged, in proportion, to carry a greater bundle of *things* upon his back unless he can afford one or two strong servants to attend him.

"I have often beheld two of those sages almost sinking under the weight of their packs, like pedlars among us; who, when they met in the streets, would lay down their loads, open their sacks, and hold conversation for an hour together; then put up their implements, help each other to resume their burdens, and take their leave."

(Chapter V)

Bourgeois critics accuse Swift of contempt for science. But it goes without saying that he criticized not science itself but the science that does not serve any practical purpose and is alien to humanity as a whole.

Being disgusted with life around him, Swift idealizes the ancient times when describing Gulliver's voyage to Glubdubdrib, the island of sorcerers, or magicians. The governor of the island has the power of calling whom he pleases from the dead and commanding their service for twenty-four hours.

"[...] his Highness, the governor, ordered me to call up whatever persons I would choose to name, and in whatever numbers, among all the dead, from the beginning of the world to the present time, and command them to answer any questions I should think fit to ask [...]. And one thing I might depend upon, that they would certainly tell me the truth, for lying was a talent of no use in the lower world."

(Chapter VII)

Swift compares a modern government with the senate of Rome:

"[...] I desired that the senate of Rome might appear before me in one large chamber, and a modern representative in counter-view in another. The first seemed to be an assembly of heroes and demi-gods, the other a knot of pedlars, pickpockets, highwaymen, and bullies".

(Chapter VII)

Part 4

A VOYAGE TO THE COUNTRY OF THE HOUYHNHNMS

The fourth voyage brings Gulliver to the ideal country of the Houyhnhnms [hu'nəmz], where there is neither sickness, dishonesty, nor any of the frivolities of human society. The human race occupies a position of servility there and a noble race of horses rules the country

master in a war in order to stifle or divert the clamour of the subjects against their evil administration. Difference in opinions hath cost many millions of lives: for instance, whether *flesh* be *bread*, or *bread* be *flesh*; whether the juice of a certain *berry* be *blood* or *wine*; whether *whistling* be a vice or a virtue; whether it be better to *kiss a post* or throw it into the fire; what is the best colour for a *coat*; whether *black*, *white*, *red*, *grey*; and whether it should be *long* or *short*, *narrow* or *wide*, *dirty* or *clean*, with many more. Neither are any wars so furious and bloody or of so long a continuance, as those occasioned by difference in opinion, especially if it be in things indifferent.

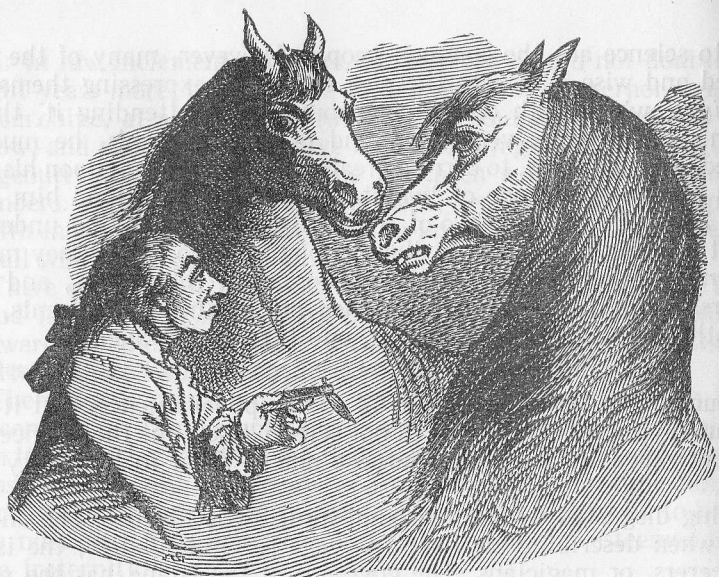
"Sometimes the quarrel between two princes is to decide which of them shall dispossess a third of his dominions, where neither of them pretend to any right. Sometimes one prince quarrelleth with another for fear the other should quarrel with him. Sometimes a war is entered upon because the enemy is too *strong*, and sometimes because he is too *weak*. Sometimes our neighbours *want* the *things* which we *have*, or *have* the *things* which we *want*; and we both fight till they take ours or give us theirs. It is a very justifiable cause of a war to invade a country after the people have been wasted by famine, destroyed by pestilence, or embroiled by factions among themselves. It is justifiable to enter into a war against our nearest ally, when one of his towns lies convenient for us, or a territory of land that would render our dominions round and compact. If a prince sends forces into a nation where the people are poor and ignorant, he may lawfully put the half of them to death, and make slaves of the rest, in order to civilise and reduce them from their barbarous way of living."

(Chapter V)

The king of the Houyhnhnms has no idea of what war is, and Gulliver gives him the following description:

"[...] I gave him a description of cannons, culverins, muskets, carabines, pistols, bullets, powder, swords, bayonets, battles, sieges, retreats, attacks, undermines, countermines, bombardments, sea fights, ships sunk with a thousand men, twenty thousand killed on each side, dying groans, limbs flying in the air, smoke, noise, confusion, trampling to death under horses' feet; flight, pursuit, victory; fields strewn with carcasses, left for food to dogs and wolves and birds of prey; plundering, stripping, ravishing, burning, and destroying. And to set forth the valour of my own dear countrymen, I assured him that I had seen them blow up a hundred enemies at once in a siege and as many in a ship; and beheld the dead bodies drop down in pieces from the clouds, to the great diversion of the spectators."

(Chapter V)



Gulliver in the country of the Houyhnhnms.

with reason and justice. Swift made horses the embodiment of wisdom, because in colloquial English the expression "horse sense" is a synonym for "common sense". The horses possess virtues which are superior to those of men. Unlike the Houyhnhnms, the Yahoos [jə'hu:z] are ugly, deceitful, greedy, and vicious creatures. Having much in common with human beings in appearance, they possess all the evil qualities one can think of.

Some bourgeois critics say that these beastly creatures show Swift's extreme pessimism, which was caused by a deep contempt and hatred of humanity. These critics do not see the real nature of Swift's pessimism; it was called forth by his great love for the common people whose sufferings he so keenly felt.

While speaking to the king of the Houyhnhnms, Gulliver tells him about his native country and about the different causes of wars. By making his hero praise the war policy of England, the author shows its stupidity and inconsistency. This device is peculiar to Swift's style.

"He asked me what were the usual causes or motives that made one country go to war with another. I answered they were innumerable; but I should only mention a few of the chief. Sometimes the ambition of princes, who never think they have land or people enough to govern. Sometimes the corruption of ministers, who engage their

- a) Gulliver's impressions of the court and the courtiers as told by himself.
- b) The two political parties.
- c) The cause of the war between Lilliput and Blefuscu.
- 2) Gulliver's voyage to Brobdingnag, the country of the giants. Gulliver's conversation with the ideal king of the giants on matters of war and peace.
- 3) The voyage to Laputa and the other dominions of the king of Laputa.
 - a) The flying island and how it helped the king to collect taxes from his people.
 - b) Gulliver's visit to the academy of sciences in Lagado.
 - c) Glubdubdrib, the island of sorcerers, or magicians. Gulliver compares a modern government with the senate of Rome.
- 4) Gulliver's voyage to the ideal country of the Houyhnhnms.
3. Whom did Swift mean to ridicule when describing the country of Lilliput and the Lilliputians?
4. Is Swift's description of the life of the giants as vivid and satirical as that of the life of the Lilliputians? Why not?
5. Against whom is Swift's satire directed when he describes the flying island and the way taxes were collected from the people?
6. What was Swift's idea in inventing the academy of sciences and its absurd projects? Is it really science that Swift ridicules?
7. What was Swift's attitude towards England's war policy as seen in Gulliver's description of the innumerable causes of war?

THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE ENGLISH REALISTIC NOVEL

The foundations of early bourgeois realism were laid by Daniel Defoe and Jonathan Swift, but their novels, though of a new type and with a new hero, were based on imaginary voyages and adventures supposed to take place far from England. Gradually the readers' tastes changed. They wanted to find more and more of their own life reflected in literature, that is to say, the everyday life of a bourgeois family with its joys and sorrows. These demands were satisfied when the great novels of Samuel Richardson, Henry Fielding, and Tobias Smollett appeared one after another. They marked a new stage in the development of the art of writing. The greatest merit of these novelists lies in their deep sympathy for the common man, the man in the street, who had become the central figure of the new bourgeois world. The common man is shown in his actual surroundings, which makes him so convincing, believable, and true to life.

SWIFT, THE GREATEST WRITER OF THE ENLIGHTENMENT

Like all the writers of the period, Swift wanted to enlighten people, trying to share with them his opinion and judgment concerning men and things. In his works, in the pamphlets in particular, he addressed himself to the common people, whom he supported with all his heart. Unlike many of his contemporaries who wanted to better the world simply by teaching, Swift openly protested against the vicious social order, and went so far in his criticism as to attack the vital principles of the bourgeois system as a whole. The great writer saw oppression, vice and misery all around, but did not know how to eliminate them. The tragic fate of the Irish people especially grieved him and he did all he could to help them to secure their independence. Swift did not see any sure way of making people happy, — hence his pessimism, which led to bitterness and biting satire in the allegorical portrayal of contemporary life which we find in “Gulliver’s Travels”.

The greatest merit of the novel lies in the satirical description of all the faults and vices of the society of the time. Under the cloak of what seems pure fantasy Swift attacks the politics of the time, religious prejudices, wars of ambition and the absurdity of many aspects of science. Swift’s uniquely simple style has an incomparable exactness and precision. Every line and every detail is alive with bitter, biting satire. The author presents the most improbable situations with the utmost gravity and makes the reader believe them.

Swift’s ideas, as expressed in “Gulliver’s Travels” had a great influence on the writers who came after him. The work has become popular in all languages. Like Defoe’s “Robinson Crusoe”, it has the merit both of amusing children and making men think.

In his satirical “Verses on the Death of Dr. Swift” (1733), the writer sums up the meaning of his life:

Fair Liberty was all his cry;
For her he stood prepar’d to die;
For her he boldly stood alone;
For her he oft exposed his own.

Exercises

1. Tell the story of Swift’s life.
2. Tell the content of “Gulliver’s Travels” according to the following plan:
 - 1) Gulliver in Lilliput.

on some means by which to earn his living. He tried his pen as a novelist; besides, at the age of thirty he became a student of a University law faculty. On graduating, he became a barrister and in 1748 accepted the post of magistrate. This work enlarged his experience, helped him to acquire a better understanding of human nature and greatly increased his hatred of social injustice. Being unable to do away with social evils, he exposed them in his books.

In the period from 1742 to 1752 Fielding wrote his best novels: "Joseph Andrews" (1742), "The Life of Mr. Jonathan Wild the Great" (1743), "The History of Tom Jones, a Foundling" (1749), and "Amelia" (1752). All these novels, excellent as they were, didn't make him rich; only his publishers prospered. Fielding continued to act as a judge till the year 1754, when he had to leave England for Portugal to restore his health, which had begun to fail. But the warm climate of the country did not help him; he died in Lisbon in October, 1754 and was buried there.

Fielding possessed qualities rarely found together: a rich imagination, coupled with great critical power and a keen knowledge of the human heart. He used to say that the three essential qualities in a novelist are genius, learning, and experience of human nature — genius alone is not sufficient without a good share of learning; nature can only furnish us with capacity. All these qualities, which he undoubtedly possessed himself, made him the favourite novelist of Karl Marx.

The qualities of candour and sincerity are especially apparent in Fielding's works. His characters are all-round living beings of flesh and blood, a combination of contradictions of good and bad. The virtues he appreciates greatest are courage, frankness and generosity. The most detestable vices for him are selfishness and hypocrisy. He can forgive frivolity and light-mindedness, but he has no pity for actions which arise from calculating or conventional motives.

All this found its expression in Fielding's masterpiece "Tom Jones".

"TOM JONES"

The novel consists of eighteen books, each beginning with an introductory chapter where the author discourses with the reader, in a free and easy manner, on certain moral and psychological themes. The plot of the novel is very complicated, its construction is carefully worked out, every detail being significant. Depicting England of the 18th century, Fielding touches upon all spheres of life. We are shown the courts of law, the prison, the church, the homes of people of all classes, inns and highways, even the theatre. Many people of different

Henry Fielding

(1707—1754)



His Life and Work

Henry Fielding, the greatest representative of bourgeois realism in the 18th century, was a descendant of an ancient, aristocratic family. He studied at the old-established boys' school of Eton.

At the age of twenty he started writing for the stage, and his first play "Love in Several Masques" was a great success with the public. The same year he entered the philological faculty of the University at Leyden,¹ but in less than two years he had to drop his studies because he was unable to pay his fees.

From 1728 till 1738, twenty-five plays were written by Fielding. In his best comedies: "A Judge Caught in His Own Trap" (1730), "Don Quixote in England" (1734), and "Pasquin" (1736), he mercilessly exposed the English court of law, the parliamentary system, the corruption of state officials, and religion. Evidently, as a result of the popular success of Fielding's comedies, strict censorship of the stage was introduced, which put an end to Fielding's career as a dramatist. Being unable to write for the stage, he was obliged to decide

¹ now Leiden [ˈlɑːdn] — a Dutch city.

glory, there was another reason for the extraordinary courage which Partridge now discovered;¹ for he had at present as much of that quality as was in the power of liquor to bestow.

Our company were now arrived within a mile of Highgate, when the stranger turned short upon Jones, and pulling out a pistol, demanded that little bank-note which Partridge had mentioned.

Jones was at first somewhat shocked at this unexpected demand; however, he presently recollected himself, and told the highwayman, all the money he had in his pocket was entirely at his service; and so saying, he pulled out upwards of three guineas, and offered to deliver it; but the other answered with an oath. That would not do. Jones answered coolly, he was very sorry for it, and returned the money into his pocket.

The highwayman then threatened, if he did not deliver the bank-note that moment, he must shoot him; holding his pistol at the same time very near to his breast. Jones instantly caught hold of the fellow's hand, which trembled so that he could scarce hold the pistol in it, and turned the muzzle from him. A struggle then ensued, in which the former wrested the pistol from the hand of his antagonist, and both came from their horses on the ground together, the highwayman upon his back, and the victorious Jones upon him.

The poor fellow now began to implore mercy of the conqueror; for, to say the truth, he was in strength by no means a match for Jones. 'Indeed, sir,' says he, 'I could have had no intention to shoot you; for you will find the pistol not loaded. This is the first robbery I ever attempted, and I have been driven by distress to this.'

At this instant, at about a hundred and fifty yards' distance, lay another person on the ground, roaring for mercy in a much louder voice than the highwayman. This was no other than Partridge himself, who, endeavouring to make his escape from the engagement, had been thrown from his horse, and lay flat on his face, not daring to look up, and expecting every minute to be shot.

In this posture he lay, till the guide, who was no otherwise concerned than for his horses, having secured the stumbling beast, came up to him, and told him his master had got the better of the highwayman.

Partridge leapt up at this news, and ran back to the place where Jones stood with his sword drawn in his hand to guard the poor fellow; which Partridge no sooner saw, than he cried out, 'Kill the villain, sir, run him through the body, kill him this instant!'

Luckily, however, for the poor wretch, he had fallen into more merciful hands; for Jones having examined the pistol, and found

¹ here showed, displayed.

social ranks and professions are introduced. The charm of the book lies in the depiction of Tom's character. He is human in the everyday sense of the word, neither idealized nor ridiculed and at the same time full-blooded. His open, generous and passionate nature leads him into a long series of adventures. Tom acts on impulse, sometimes well and sometimes ill, but never from interested motives. He is light-minded and naive; but kind, honest and unselfish, always ready to help anyone who needs his assistance. If he heaps fault upon fault and misfortune on misfortune, it is because he is continually falling a victim to prejudice and is caught in the snare of hypocrisy. His intentions are noble and good, but owing to his simple-heartedness, which is often coupled with bad luck, he is constantly accused of vices he is not guilty of.

The extract given below describes an adventure which happened to Tom Jones on his journey to London and which reveals some traits of his character. As soon as Tom learns of the poor man's misery and distress, he is ready to give him his last guinea, in spite of the fact that some minutes before the man wanted to rob him.

WHAT HAPPENED TO MR. JONES IN HIS JOURNEY FROM ST. ALBANS

They were got about two miles beyond Barnet, and it was now the dusk of the evening, when a genteel-looking man, but upon a very shabby horse, rode up to Jones, and asked him whether he was going to London; to which Jones answered in the affirmative. The gentleman replied, 'I should be obliged to you, sir, if you will accept of my company; for it is very late, and I am a stranger to the road.' Jones readily complied with the request; and on they travelled together, holding that sort of discourse which is usual on such occasions.

Of this, indeed, robbery was the principal topic: upon which subject the stranger expressed great apprehensions; but Jones declared he had very little to lose, and consequently as little to fear. Here Partridge could not forbear putting in his word. 'Your honour,' said he, 'may think it a little, but I am sure, if I had a hundred-pound bank-note in my pocket, as you have, I should be very sorry to lose it; but, for my part, I never was less afraid in my life; for we are four of us, and if we all stand by one another, the best man in England can't rob us. Suppose he should have a pistol, he can kill but one of us, and a man can die but once. — That's my comfort, a man can die but once.'

Besides the reliance on superior numbers, a kind of valour which hath raised a certain nation among the moderns to a high pitch of

it to be really unloaded, began to believe all the man had told him, before Partridge came up: namely, that he was a novice in the trade, and that he had been driven to it by the distress he mentioned, the greatest indeed imaginable, that of five hungry children, and a wife lying in of the sixth, in the utmost want and misery. The truth of all which the highwayman most vehemently asserted, and offered to convince Mr. Jones of it, if he would take the trouble to go to his house, which was not above two miles off; saying, 'That he desired no favour, but upon condition of proving all he had alledged.'¹

Jones at first pretended that he would take the fellow at his word and go with him, declaring that his fate should depend entirely on the truth of his story. Upon this the poor fellow immediately expressed so much alacrity, that Jones was perfectly satisfied with his veracity, and began now to entertain sentiments of compassion for him. He returned the fellow his empty pistol, advised him to think of honest means of relieving his distress, and gave him a couple of guineas for the immediate support of his wife and his family; adding, 'he wished he had more for his sake, for the hundred pound that had been mentioned was not his own.'

Our readers will probably be divided in their opinions concerning this action; some may applaud it perhaps as an act of extraordinary humanity, while those of a more saturnine temper will consider it as a want of regard to that justice which every man owes his country. Partridge certainly saw it in that light; for he testified much dissatisfaction on the occasion, quoted an old proverb, and said, he should not wonder if the rogue attacked them again before they reached London.

The highwayman was full of expressions of thankfulness and gratitude. He actually dropt tears, or pretended so to do. He vowed he would immediately return home, and would never afterwards commit such a transgression: whether he kept his word or no, perhaps may appear hereafter.

Our travellers having remounted their horses, arrived in town without encountering any new mishap. On the road much pleasant discourse passed between Jones and Partridge, on the subject of their last adventure: in which Jones expressed a great compassion for those highwaymen who are, by unavoidable distress, driven, as it were, to such illegal courses as generally bring them to a shameful death: 'I mean,' said he, 'those only whose highest guilt extends no farther than to robbery.'

(Book XII, Chapter XIV)

¹ old spelling of alleged

The extract also shows the author's attitude to criminals. Fielding makes the reader sympathize with "the highwayman". He does not blame the man for his intention to rob Tom. Fielding justifies robbers and seeks to prove that they are not to blame for the crimes they commit, as he understands the true cause of them. To his mind, the responsibility lies with those who make them starve.

* * *

In "Tom Jones" Fielding established a new standard of novel-writing by combining the strict, concise structure of drama with the breadth and variety of the picaresque novel.¹

For a combination of a perfectly logical and well-knit plot with a wealth and vividness of characterization, "Tom Jones" knows very few rivals among the great novels of world literature.

Exercises

1. Tell the story of Henry Fielding's life.
2. What problems did Fielding deal with in his plays? What put an end to his work as a playwright?
3. What are the merits of his novels?
4. What can you say about the common man of the early bourgeois novelists? Is he a worker, a peasant or a person of good breeding with a fair chance of acquiring fortune?
5. Why was Tom Jones's character popular with contemporary readers?
6. What features of Tom are revealed in Book XII, Chapter XIV?
7. Speak about Fielding's attitude towards "the highwayman". Does he make the reader despise him?
8. Have you seen the novel filmed? What is your impression? Compare the film with the novel.

THE SENTIMENTALISTS

The optimism felt in literature during the first half of the 18th century gave way to a certain depression as years went by. Towards the middle of the century a new literary trend, that of Sentimentalism, appeared. The first representative of the sentimental school in English literature was Samuel Richardson. His novels "Pamela [ˈpæmɪlə] or Virtue Rewarded" (1740), "Clarissa [kləˈrɪsə] (1748), and "The History of Sir Charles Grandison" (1754) are works in which the inner world

¹ See footnote 2 on page 81.

of the characters is shown. Richardson glorifies middle-class virtues as opposed to the immorality of the aristocracy. He makes his readers sympathize with his heroes. These novels were very much admired in the 18th and 19th centuries. They were well known in Russia. Much in the works of the novelists of the time does not appeal to readers today; but the novels of these writers are full of humour and truthful descriptions of men and things, and as such will always be read.

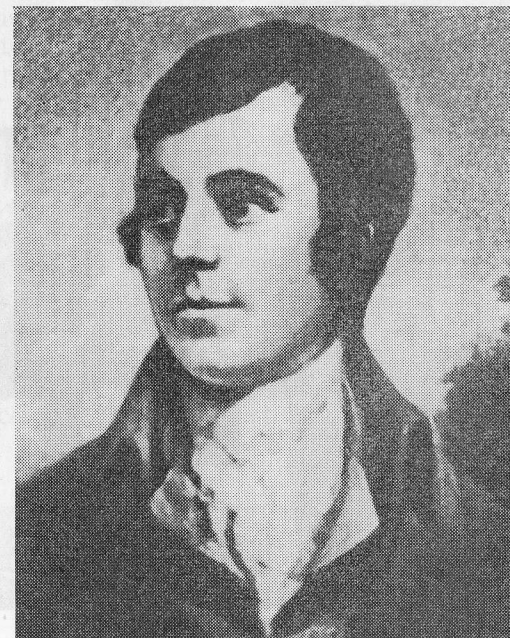
Influenced by the French writer Rousseau [ʀu:su:l] the sentimentalists thought that civilization was harmful to humanity. They believed that man should live close to nature and be free from the corrupting influence of town life. In Oliver Goldsmith's novel "The Vicar of Wakefield" (1766) and Laurence Sterne's "Sentimental Journey", as well as in other novels of the time, the corruption of town life is contrasted to the happy patriarchal life in the country. Oliver Goldsmith was also a poet. His famous poem "The Deserted Village" shows England at the time of the expropriation of the peasants.

Exercises

1. Why did the literary trend of Sentimentalism appear towards the middle of the 18th century?
2. What did the sentimentalists show in their novels and why?

Robert Burns

(1759—1796)



Robert Burns was the most democratic poet of the 18th century. His birthday is celebrated in Scotland as a national holiday. His verses inspired many poets, British and foreign, and were highly appreciated by Karl Marx and his daughters.

Burns's poetry may be regarded as a treasury of all that is best in Scottish songs, some of them being late echoes of much older ones.

Burns is very popular in the Soviet Union. The first translations of his works appeared in our country at the close of the 18th century, and since then he has always been widely read. We admire the plain Scottish peasant who became one of the world's greatest poets.

His Life

Robert Burns was born on January 25, 1759, in a small clay cottage at Alloway [ˈæləweɪ] in Ayrshire [ˈæfɪə], Scotland. His father, William Burns, was a poor farmer. Later, the poet wrote about him in his verses "My Father Was a Farmer":



Burns's cottage. Alloway.

My father was a farmer upon the Carrick border, O,
And carefully he bred me in decency and order, O.
He bade me act a manly part, though I had ne'er
a farthing, O, never
For without an honest, manly heart no man was
worth regarding, O.

Poor as he was, William Burns tried to give his son the best education he could afford. Robert was sent to school at the age of six, but as his father could not pay for the two sons, Robert and his brother Gilbert attended school in turn. Thus William had to pay for only one pupil. When not at school, the boys helped the father with his work in the fields. Robert was at the plough working from morning till night. He strained his heart; he became subject to severe attacks of rheumatic fever.

The school was closed some months after the boys had begun attending it, and William Burns persuaded two or three neighbours to in-

vite a clever young man, Murdoch ['mæ:dək] by name, to teach their children languages and grammar. Robert was a capable boy and, with the help of his new teacher, received a decent education. He learned the French and Latin languages and became fond of reading. He read whatever he could lay his hands on. His favourite writers were Shakespeare, Sterne, Smollett, and Robert Fergusson ['fə:gəsən], a talented Scottish poet (1750—1774), whose tragic fate deeply touched Burns. In his many verses, devoted to Fergusson, Burns accuses the "titled knaves", who let the "ill-fated genius" die.

1

Ill-fated genius! Heaven-taught Fergusson!
What heart that feels, and will not yield a tear
To think Life's sun did set, e'er well begun
To shed its influence on thy bright career! ever

2

O, why should truest Worth and Genius pine
Beneath the iron grasp of Want and Woe,
While titled knaves and idiot-greatness shine
In all the splendour Fortune can bestow?

("Lines on Fergusson")

Burns started writing poems at the age of seventeen. He composed verses to the melodies of old folk-songs, which he had admired from his early childhood. He sang of the woods, fields and wonderful valleys of his native land.

The ploughing that led to the composition of those songs, was profitless, however, in another respect: in vain did Robert and Gilbert toil like "galley-slaves" to help their father. In 1784, worn out, exhausted and burdened with debts, William Burns died. After his death the family moved to Mossgiel where Robert and Gilbert managed to rent a small farm. The young men worked hard, but the land gave poor crops, and the affairs of the family went from bad to worse. The young poet keenly felt the injustice of the world, where the best land, pastures, and woods belonged to the landlords. His indignation was mirrored in his many verses, which became so dear to the hearts of the common people.

Though Robert despised those who worshipped money, "to be rich was not my wish" ("My Father Was a Farmer"), he now became well aware of the fact that poverty could ruin his whole life: he had fallen in love

with Jean Armour and was going to marry her, but the girl's father did not want to have a poor peasant for his son-in-law. The fact that the young people loved each other did not alter his intention to marry Jean to a rich man.

Seeing that there was no way for a poor peasant in Scotland, Burns decided to sail for Jamaica, in the hope of obtaining a job on some sugar plantation. The poet's mood was expressed in the "Lines Written on a Bank-note".

Wae worth thy power, thou curséd leaf!
Fell source of a' my woe and grief,
For lack o' thee I've lost my lass,
For lack o' thee I scrimp my glass!
I see the children of affliction
Unaided, through thy curs'd restriction.

Woe befall
Deadly; all
of
I drink less

.....
For lack o' thee I leave this much-lov'd shore,
Never, perhaps, to greet old Scotland more.

To raise the passage money, Robert made up his mind to publish some of his poems. The little volume "Poems Chiefly in the Scottish Dialect", published in 1786, went off rapidly and brought in about twenty guineas. The book contained lyrical, humorous and satirical poems written in his earlier years.

When Burns was about to leave for Jamaica, he received a letter from several Edinburgh scholars, who praised his verses and invited him to come to the capital. The letter changed the current of his life and kept the poet in his native land. He accepted the invitation, went to Edinburgh and within a few days was welcomed as one of the "wonders of the world". A new and enlarged edition of his poems was the result. He toured Scotland in triumph — as "Caledonia's¹ Bard". He was received by the "pillars" of society, and the doors of the most fashionable drawing-rooms were open to him. But Robert felt ill at ease among those people who tried to use his talent for their own ends and never really helped or morally supported him. Burns was never offered an opportunity to devote all his energy to literature.

After the new edition of his poems, Burns returned to his native village with money enough to buy a farm and marry Jean Armour, whose father was now glad to have the poet as his son-in-law.

Though Burns's poems were very popular, he always remained poor: most of the money was spent on the monument to Robert Fer-

¹ Caledonia [ˌkælɪˈdounjə] (poetic) — Scotland.

gusson, the rest was hardly enough to support his wife and children. His work at the farm, hard as it was, did not make him rich either. Again there remained the problem of earning a living, again he was without sufficient capital to see him over the inevitable rainy day. In 1791 he went bankrupt and was obliged to sell the farm and take a position as customs officer in the town of Dumfries [dʌmˈfriːs]. The job was extremely hard: the poet had to cover long distances on horseback in any weather. However, neither weariness nor hardships could suppress the poet in him, and he continued his literary work.

Hard work destroyed the poet's health. He died in poverty at the age of thirty-seven, haunted by the shadow of the debtors' prison. Even on his death-bed, he got a letter in which he was threatened with imprisonment for a debt of seven pounds.

After his death, the widow and children of the great poet were literally left without a shilling.

Burns was mourned by all the honest people of his country. His funeral was attended by a crowd of ten thousand. They were the common Scottish people whom he had loved and for whom he had written his poems and songs. And it was those common people who raised enough money by subscription to provide his widow with sustenance for the rest of her life and give all his children an education.

Since the death of Robert Burns, all visitors to Dumfries pay homage to the poet by visiting his burial-place.

Robert Burns's Literary Work

The Democratic Character of the Poet

Robert Burns was a true son of the Scottish peasantry. His poems embody their thoughts and aspirations, their human dignity, their love of freedom and hatred of all oppressors.

In his poem "Is There for Honest Poverty" Burns says that it is not wealth and titles, but the excellent qualities of man's heart and mind that make him "king o' men for a' that". Independence of mind and honesty, sense and dignity — these are the qualities the poet appreciates: they "are higher rank than a' that". In another poem, "Epistle to Davie, a Brother Poet" he praises the optimistic nature of the Scottish peasant who can be happy without titles, rank, or riches.

It's no in titles nor in rank:
It's no in wealth like Lon'on Bank
To purchase peace and rest.

not
London

making, much, more
learning

This life has joys for you and I;
And joys that riches ne'er could buy,
And joys the very best. never

never

("Revolutionary Lyric", or "Why Should We Idly Waste Our Prime")

(As come it will for a' that)

over all

have the first place

("Is There for Honest Poverty")

His Revolutionary Spirit

Many verses of the poet were inspired by the Great French Revolution, which he supported with all his heart. In his poem "The Tree of Liberty" Burns praises the French revolutionaries who planted "the Tree of Liberty" in their country. The poet regrets the fact that there is no "Tree of Liberty" in Britain, that is to say, the people do not struggle for freedom.

it will

such

Betwixt = Between;
a river in Scotland

alas

valley of

with

No

beyond

In his cantata "The Jolly Beggars" (or "Love and Liberty") the poet voices his protest against all oppressors.

A fig for those by law protected!
Liberty's a glorious feast,
Courts for cowards were erected,
Churches built to please the priest!

Burns's "Revolutionary Lyric" summons the Scottish people to struggle for freedom and independence.

Why should we idly waste our prime
Repeating our oppressions?
Come rouse to arms! 'Tis now the time
To punish past transgressions.

trod

agents

favourites

To Burns's mind death is better than slavery:

Now each true patriot's song shall be: —
 'Welcome Death or Libertie!'

The poet hopes that in the future the oppressed people of England and Scotland will start fighting for their freedom and independence.

Then: Old

cheerfully

("The Tree of Liberty")

Burns expresses his firm belief in a happy future, when people all over the world will live in peace and enjoy full equality.

Wi' plenty o' sic trees, I trow, believe
The world would live in peace, man. world
The sword would help to mak' a plough,
The din o' war wad cease, man. noise; would
Like brethren in a common cause,
We'd on each other smile, man;
And equal rights and equal laws
Wad gladden every isle, man.

("The Tree of Liberty")

While the realism and humanism of Burns's poetry make him one of the most progressive writers of the Enlightenment, its democratic and revolutionary spirit brings him closer to the revolutionary romantic trend of the 19th century.

His Love for Scotland

Burns had a deep love for Scotland, its history and folklore. "Address to Edinburgh" is a hymn to the common Scottish people:

Thy sons, Edina, social, kind, [i'dainə]
With open arms the stranger hail;
Their views enlarg'd, their lib'ral mind, liberal
Above the narrow, rural vale;
Attentive still to Sorrow's wail,
Or modest Merit's silent claim:
And never may their sources fail!
And never Envy blot their name!

The poet was deeply interested in the glorious past of his country, which he calls "The birthplace of valour, the country of worth" ("My Heart's in the Highlands").

His favourite national hero was William Wallace (1272?—1305), the leader of the uprising against the English oppressors. The Scottish people led by Wallace and Robert the Bruce [bru:s] (1274—1329), king of Scotland, defeated the English army in the battle at Bannockburn [ˈbænəkɪn] in 1314 and secured Scottish independence. "Bruce at Bannockburn" (or "Scots, Wha Hae") is one of the best poems by Burns. The verses were published only after the poet's death.

SCOTS, WHA HAE

Who Have

1

Scots, wha hae wi' Wallace bled,
Scots, wham Bruce has aften led, often
Welcome to your gory bed
Or to victorie!

2

Now's the day, and now's the hour:
See the front o' battle lour, coming near
See approach proud Edward's power —
Chains and slavery!

3

Wha will be a traitor knave?
Wha can fill a coward's grave?
Wha sae base as be a slave? — so
Let him turn, and flee!

4

Wha for Scotland's King and Law
Freedom's sword will strongly draw,
Freeman stand or freeman fa', fall
Let him follow me!

5

By Oppression's woes and pains,
By your sons in servile chains,
We will drain our dearest veins
But they shall be free!

6

Lay the proud usurpers low!
Tyrants fall in every foe!
Liberty's in every blow!
Let us do, or die!

In the poem "Caledonia"; written on the same theme, Burns expresses his hatred of the English oppressors and glorifies "brave Caledonia", "A lambkin in peace but a lion in war".

In many of his poems he sings the beauty of his native land, where he spent all his life:

ifies the strength of the common people which is immortal and cannot be done away with.

Three kings wanted to kill John Barleycorn.

There was three kings into the east,
Three kings both great and high,
And they hae sworn a solemn oath
John Barleycorn should die.

But, however hard they tried, they could not crush him.

His colour sicken'd more and more,
He faded into age;
And then his enemies began
To show their deadly rage.
They've ta'en a weapon long and sharp, taken
And cut him by the knee;
.....
They wasted o'er a scorching flame
The marrow of his bones;
But a miller us'd him worst of all, used
For he crush'd him between two stones.

However, all their efforts were in vain. Even when "they hae ta'en his very heart's blood", it did not help either. John Barleycorn was not dead, as his joyful spirit was alive in those who had a chance "to taste his blood".

John Barleycorn was a hero bold,
Of noble enterprise;
For if you do but taste his blood,
'Twill make your courage rise.

The poet wishes the future generation to be as strong:

And may his great posterity
Ne'er fail in old Scot'land!

His Lyrics

Burns was a remarkable lyric poet. Some of his lyrical pieces are tender and pathetic, some abound in humour and irony. (All his life he wanted to write a play, but he never got round to it. However, from his lyrics, in which so many various characters are shown, we may see what a dramatist was lost in him.) Burns's masterful touch

.....
 Wherever I wander, wherever I rove,
 The hills of the Highlands for ever I love.
 Farewell to the mountains high covered with snow;
 Farewell to the straths and green valleys below;
 Farewell to the forests and wild-hanging woods;
 Farewell to the torrents and loud-pouring floods.

(“My Heart’s in the Highlands”)

In Burns’s poems, nature forms a part of the people’s life, though he does not personify it as some poets of the later period do.

His Optimism

In spite of his poverty, hunger and never-ceasing toil, Burns was an optimist. He enjoyed his life as few of his contemporaries did. In a world shot through with terror and darkness (it was in such a world that Burns wrote) he sang of the richness and wonder of life:

.....
 I dropt my schemes like idle dreams, and came
 to this conclusion, O: —
 The past was bad, and the future hid; its good
 or ill untried, O,
 But the present hour was in my pow’r, and so I
 would enjoy it, O.

power

(“My Father Was a Farmer”)

Burns believes in the happy future of mankind. He is sure that

The Golden Age we’ll then revive:
 Each man will be a brother;
 In harmony we all shall live,
 And share the earth together;

(“Revolutionary Lyric”)

Burns hopes that

It’s comin yet for a’ that,
 That man to man the world o’er
 Shall brithers be for a’ that.

brothers

(“Is There for Honest Poverty”)

The poem “John Barleycorn”, in which Burns tells of the way whisky is made, is symbolic in its meaning. John Barleycorn person-

upon the human heart-strings is the most characteristic feature of his talent. There is a melodic quality in his poetry. Such lyrics as "A Red, Red Rose", "Scots, Wha Hae", "Auld Lang Syne", "John Barleycorn", "My Heart's in the Highlands", and many others were composed to the old folk-melodies or later set to music, and are popular as songs all over the world.

In his lyrical poems and songs Burns glorifies true love and friendship, free from any motives of gain and hypocritical morality. In many of them he reveals the beauty of nature.

In his lyrical pieces, as in his other works, he remains the bard of freedom.

Exercises

1. Tell the story of Burns's life.
2. Why is Burns considered to be the most democratic poet of his age?
3. Speak about the poet's patriotism; illustrate his ideas by quoting lines from his verses.
4. What qualities did Burns appreciate most of all in man?
5. What are the main themes of his lyrics?
6. What features of Burns's poetry bring him close to the romantic trend of the 19th century?
7. Name the songs of the poet which are most popular in our country.
8. Compare the Russian translation of some of Burns's poems with the original and say whether the author's style is preserved.

Review Questions and Tasks

I.

1. What common features had the movement of the Enlightenment all over Europe? What was particular about the English Enlightenment?
2. What forms of literature became the most popular in Britain in the 18th century? Characterize the principal features of the leading genre.
3. Characterize each of the three periods in the development of 18th century English literature.
4. Characterize the literary trend of Sentimentalism. Name the leading sentimentalists and explain how they tried to stir the heart of the reader.

II.

1. Comment on Crusoe's character as typical of the bourgeoisie at the period of its prosperity.
2. Why is the novel "Robinson Crusoe" considered praise of fortitude, energy and the creative power of man?
3. What makes the novel still popular? Which of Crusoe's features appeal to the reader today?

III.

1. Why did the Irish people consider Swift their champion in the struggle for the welfare and freedom of their country? Speak about his works written in defence of Ireland.
2. How does Swift reveal his attitude towards the English government, the court, and religious controversy in his works?
3. How does Swift criticize England's war policy?
4. What literary device does Swift use in order to make his critical ideas conspicuous to the reader? Comment on the nature of his satire.
5. What makes the reader believe in Swift's fantasy?

IV.

1. Why do we consider "Tom Jones" the peak of the bourgeois realistic novel?
2. Dwell on Fielding's humanism and optimism. Comment on the most attractive features of the key-character in "Tom Jones".

V.

1. Say a few words about the role of folklore in Burns's poetry.
2. What impresses you most of all in the poet's literary work?
3. What is Burns's contribution to literature?
4. Name the greatest Russian enlightener and comment on his work.

V. The Romantic Movement

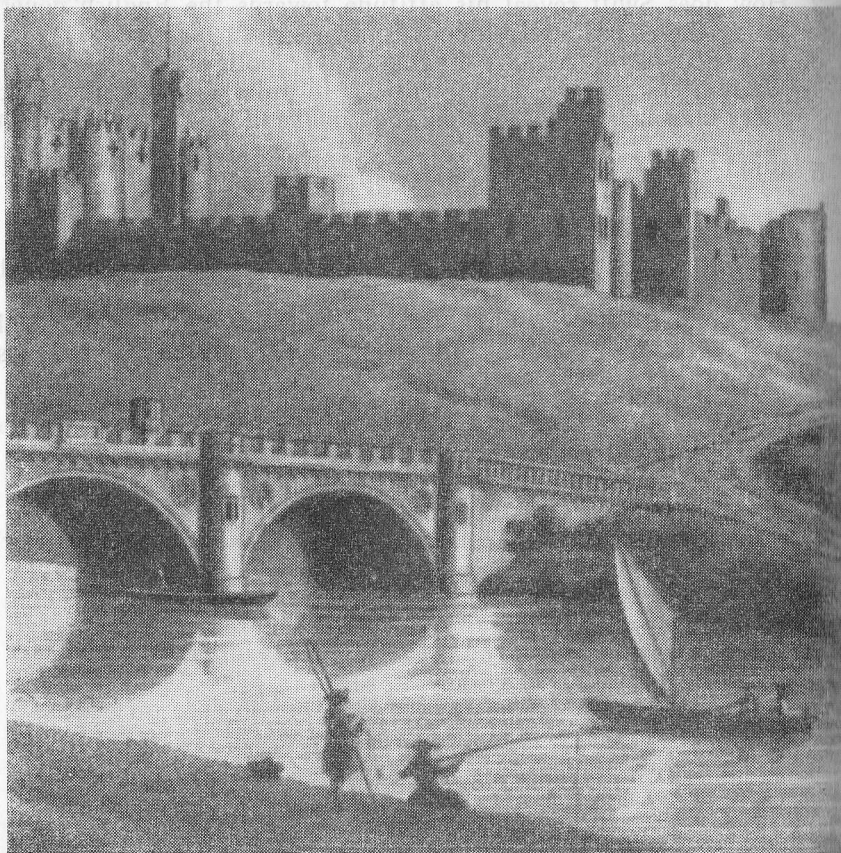
Historical Background. Romanticism, which was the leading literary movement in England for more than half a century, was caused by great social and economic changes.

The Industrial Revolution, which had begun in the middle of the 18th century, was no sudden change from home manufacturing to large-scale factory production. Enclosing common land had begun as early as the 16th century, but it was only in the second half of the 18th century that the process became rapid and spread all over Britain. The peasants, completely deprived of their lands, were forced to go to work in factories. Mines and factories had changed the face of the country. Where flowing rivers and green meadows lay, towns sprang up, because water-power was the best available force to drive the new machines. But mechanization did not improve the life of the common people. It only meant a new form of slavery. Now the economic and social ills were clearly seen by the people: the diseases of industrial towns, the misery of child labour, the crowds of underpaid workers, the tyranny of the factory bell that had turned human beings into parts of a machine and made them desperate at the loss of personal freedom. The suffering of the new class, the proletariat, led to the first strikes, and workers took to destroying machines. This was a movement directed against industrial slavery. Workers, who called themselves Luddites after a certain Ned Ludd who in a fit of fury broke two textile frames, naively believed that machines were the chief cause of their sufferings. These actions led to severe repression by the authorities.

The Great French Revolution was accepted as progressive by many in Britain, but when it involved all sections of the French population, it gave a shock to the ruling classes. Under the influence of the Revolution the Irish peasants plotted a rebellion against English landlordism. It broke out in 1798 but was cruelly drowned in blood. The British

"The dead have been awakened — shall I sleep?
The world's at war with tyrants — shall I crouch?
The harvest's ripe — and shall I pause to reap?
I slumber not; the thorn is in my couch;
Each day a trumpet soundeth in mine ear,
Its echo in my heart..."

BYRON



government took the lead in the counter-revolutionary wars against France.

Now the belief of progressive-minded people in the ideal nature of the bourgeois system fell to pieces. As a result, a new humanist movement, that of Romanticism, sprang up towards the close of the 18th century.

Romanticism, Its Passive and Its Revolutionary Trend. Romanticism was a movement against the progress of bourgeois civilization, which had driven whole sections of the population to poverty and enslaved their personal freedom. It was an effort to do away with the injustice that comes into being within the capitalist formation of society, that is to say, the exploitation of man by man. But no one as yet knew what was to be done to achieve equality and freedom.

New themes for writing arose: no longer were writers attracted to the domestic epic which had been the chief subject of the novel. Protesting against the bourgeois system that crushed human individuality to insignificance, they longed to depict strong individuals, endowed with grand, tempestuous and even demonic passions. The romanticists made emotion, and not reason, the chief force of their works. This emotion found its expression chiefly in poetry.

The problem of what was to become of man stirred the hearts of all men of letters.

Some poets were seized with panic and an irresistible desire to get away from the present. They wished to call back "the good old days", the time long before the mines and factories came, when people worked on "England's green and pleasant land". These poets are called the **Passive Romanticists**. They spoke for the English farmers and Scottish peasants who were ruined by the Industrial Revolution. They idealized the patriarchal way of life during the Middle Ages, a period that seemed to them harmonious and peaceful. Their motto was: "Close to Nature and from Nature to God", because they believed that religion put man at peace with the world.

The poets William Wordsworth, Samuel Taylor Coleridge [ˈkɒlɪdʒ], and Robert Southey [ˈsaʊði] belonged to this group. They were also called the **Lake Poets** after the Lake District in the north-west of England where they lived. The Lake District attracted the poets because industry had not yet invaded this part of the country.

Another group of poets distinguished themselves for the revolutionary spirit which they brought into poetry. The **Revolutionary Romanticists** tried to look ahead and see the future. They spoke up for the new working class and believed in their right to active struggle for liberty. They kept an eye on all political events and sympathized with the national liberation movement in all oppressed countries.

The poets believed that the peoples of the world would gain freedom, and imagined that the states of the future would be somewhat like the republics of ancient Greece and Rome. Nevertheless, great pessimism is felt in the works of all these poets, because they did not understand that the struggle for freedom was led at that time by the class of the bourgeoisie and therefore could not give freedom to the workers.

The outstanding Revolutionary Romanticists were George Gordon Byron and Percy Bysshe Shelley.

THE LAKE POETS

Wordsworth (1770—1850), Coleridge (1772—1834), and Southey (1774—1843), having similar tastes in art and politics, formed a literary circle, the influence of which was felt on some other writers of the time. During the early nineties the works of these young poets were progressive. They criticized the existing social order, and great enthusiasm for the French Revolution can be felt in their works of the first period.

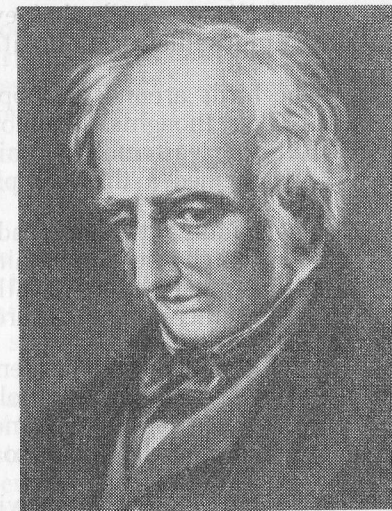
In 1793 Wordsworth wrote a poem, "Guilt and Sorrow". It is about a homeless sailor who was driven to crime, and a lonely woman who had lost her husband and three children in the war; all suffer from the cruelty of the law, but the only comfort Wordsworth offers is religion.

Though Wordsworth, and the other Lake Poets too, were Passive Romanticists, they were all great humanists. The following poem shows us what Wordsworth felt for man.

LINES WRITTEN IN EARLY SPRING

I heard a thousand blended notes,
While in a grove I sat¹ reclined,

¹ sate (old use) — sat.



William Wordsworth.

In that sweet mood when pleasant thoughts
Bring sad thoughts to the mind.

To her fair works did Nature link
The human soul that through me ran;¹
And much it grieved my heart to think
What man has made of man.

Through primrose tufts, in that green bower,
The periwinkle² trailed its wreaths;
And 'tis my faith that every flower
Enjoys the air it breathes.

The birds around me hopped and played,
Their thoughts I cannot measure: —
But the least motion which they made
It seemed a thrill of pleasure.

The budding twigs spread out their fan,
To catch the breezy air;
And I must think, do all I can,
That there was pleasure there.

If this belief from heaven be sent,
If such be Nature's holy plan,
Have I no reason to lament
What man has done to man?

Southey met the Revolution with his drama "Wat Tyler" telling of the English peasant revolt in 1381. The following is the song of rebels:

WAT TYLER

"When Adam delved and Eve span
Who was then the Gentleman?"

Wretched is the infant's lot,
Born within the straw-roof'd cot;
Be he generous, wise or brave,
He must only be a slave.

¹ that is, spring made the poet enjoy nature.

² periwinkle — a creeping plant with light blue flowers.

Long, long labour, little rest,
Still to toil, to be oppress'd;
Drain'd by taxes of his store,
Punish'd next for being poor:
This is the poor wretch's lot,
Born within the straw-roof'd cot.
While the peasant works, — to sleep,
What the peasant sows, — to reap,
On the couch of ease to lie,
Rioting in revelry;
Be he villain, be he fool,
Still to hold despotic rule,
Trampling on his slaves with scorn!
This is to be nobly born.

"When Adam delved and Eve span,
Who was then the Gentleman?"

Coleridge was also inspired to write a revolutionary poem. He wrote on the fall of the Bastille, but he failed to see the bitterness of the battles that had been fought by the people; in his poem liberty is sent from above by Providence.

The years of terror in France brought a change in the outlook of the Lake Poets: they could not understand the historical significance of the events, declared their hostility to the Revolution and sided with the reactionary policy of the British government. The end of the nineties mark **the second period** in the creative work of the Lake Poets.

It was at this time that Coleridge and Southey, with four other enthusiasts wished to found a domestic republic in America, which they called a "Pantisocracy". In it all property was to be held in common and people would enjoy a free life. Want of money, however, prevented this Utopian scheme.

Contempt for the political struggle and fear of the future hushed the poets into a world of their own fantasy. In 1798 Wordsworth and Coleridge published a volume of "Lyrical Ballads", in which the ideas of Reac-



Samuel Taylor Coleridge in 1795.

Below the kirk,¹ below the hill,
Below the lighthouse top.

The Sun came up upon the left,
Out of the sea came he!
And he shone bright, and on the right,
Went down into the sea."

Then the ship was driven to the South Pole:

"And now there came both mist and snow,
And it grew wondrous cold:
And ice, mast-high, came floating by,
As green as emerald."

When the Albatross appeared, the ship turned and sailed northward
till it reached the equator:

"And a good south wind sprung up behind;
The Albatross did follow,
And every day, for food and play,
Came to the mariners' hollo.

.....
The Sun now rose upon the right:
Out of the sea came he,
Still hid in mist, and on the left
Went down into the sea."

The ship is becalmed; the sailors suffer from unbearable heat; the
unusual silence makes the men feel lifeless:

"Down dropt the breeze, the sails dropt down,
'Twas sad as sad could be;
And we did speak only to break
The silence of the sea!

All in a hot and copper sky,
The bloody Sun, at noon,
Right up above the mast did stand,
No bigger than the Moon.

¹ kirk (*Scottish*) — church.

tionary Romanticism were plainly shown: man is depicted as a helpless creature living at the mercy of supernatural forces. This idea is clearly expressed in the famous ballad by Coleridge, written in the old English ballad style, "The Rime of the Ancient Mariner". The sea is depicted as something monstrous that cannot be overcome, something fatal that brings woe and death. Living beings seem to be forms without substance. But the wonderful description of the sea and the ship, the floating mass of green ice and the huge sea-bird, the Albatross, speak for themselves. Coleridge brings the reader into direct contact with the sea.

"The Rime of the Ancient Mariner" is a fantastic story of a voyage told by an old sailor to a passer-by who was going to a wedding. With a few touches of his pen Coleridge makes the old seaman stand before us with his grey beard, glittering eyes and his long, brown, skinny hands. The passer-by cannot choose but listen to the unusual story of the old man.

At first the ship sailed southward till it reached the Line (equator), but drawn by a storm, it could not change its course and was driven towards the South Pole. It nearly got jammed in the ice. At the time, a great sea-bird, the Albatross, came through the snow-fog: it was received as a sign of good fortune. In truth, the ice split, a south wind sprang up behind, and the ship sailed northward again with the Albatross following behind. But evil thoughts took hold of the Mariner and with his bow and arrow he shot the bird of good omen.

For such an act of cruelty the ship is suddenly becalmed when it reaches the Line: the Albatross begins to be avenged. They have no fresh water on board and the crew nearly dies of thirst. Suddenly they see a Skeleton-ship sailing towards them without tide or wind. Its ribs are seen as bars on the face of the setting sun. It has only two passengers on board: Death and Life-in-death in the shape of a beautiful woman. The two play dice for the ship's crew: Life-in-death wins the Mariner and Death wins all the others. Then the Skeleton-ship disappears. One by one the sailors drop down on the deck. The loneliness of the Mariner in mid-ocean among the dead bodies of his ship-mates is described. This is the punishment of the guilty Mariner. After a time the spell is broken, and the ship returns to England, but the Mariner is condemned for ever to travel from land to land and teach respect and love for all God's creatures.

Note how the poet describes the ship sailing southward; we feel the earth to be round:

"The ship was cheered, the harbour cleared,
Merrily did we drop

..... For I have learned
To look on nature, not as in the hour
Of thoughtless youth; but hearing oftentimes
The still, sad music of humanity,
.....

Wordsworth expressed himself in plain and simple language, sometimes, even, with the danger of falling into flat prose.

The merit of the Lake School was that they introduced into poetry the short, straightforward, forceful words and constructions of everyday speech. They brought sound and colour into verse, drove out the artificial style of the previous age with its fashion of introducing characters of Greek mythology to express abstract ideas. These poets appreciated folklore and national art: they all insisted that poetry should be linked with the popular folk traditions of a nation; should be stimulated by these traditions and should develop them.

Day after day, day after day,
We stuck, nor breath nor motion;
As idle as a painted ship
Upon a painted ocean.

Water, water, everywhere,
And all the boards did shrink;
Water, water, everywhere,
Nor any drop to drink."

All the men on the ship are dead and the Mariner is left alone:

"Alone, alone, all, all alone,
Alone on a wide, wide sea!
And never a saint took pity on
My soul in agony."

Coleridge was the most talented of the Lake Poets, but having no self-discipline, he did not give his talent full development. That's why his best and most beautiful poems, "Christabel ['kristəbell]" and "Kubla Khan ['kublə 'kən]", were left unfinished. He believed poetry could be written only under a mystical inspiration and the poet should follow his intuition wherever it might lead him. Coleridge practically stopped writing poetry in his early thirties, and later was famous chiefly as a critic.

We have said that the influence of the romanticists upon literature was very great. It lay in the new approach to life and art. They urged a return to nature. Among the solitary lakes that mirrored the lonely hills they hoped to find "the perfect balance of man and nature", or "the natural state of man" as they called it. That's why so many of their poems praise nature. Wordsworth was a great master of description. A beautiful poem of his is: "Lines Composed a Few Miles Above Tintern Abbey". When he describes the landscape, we not only feel his love for nature, but also his great alarm at its being spoiled by the invasion of industrialism.

I bounded o'er the mountains, by the sides
Of the deep rivers, and the lonely streams,
Wherever nature led: more like a man
Flying from something that he dreads than one
Who sought the thing he loved
.

Byron hated wars and the rising power of capital. He sympathized with the oppressed people and seemed to understand their role in the future battles for freedom.

They fight for freedom, who were never free.

("Childe Harold")

However, definite limitations of the poet's world outlook caused deep contradictions in his works. Though Byron believed in the final triumph of good over evil and "...perceived that revolution alone can save the earth..." ("Don Juan"), he could not foretell the paths the class struggle would take in the future, and many of his verses are touched with disappointment and scepticism. The philosophy of "world sorrow" becomes the leading theme of his works. The poet's attention is drawn to the individual and he dwells on the valour of the romantic hero, fighting for his own personal liberty.

Romantic individualism and a pessimistic attitude to life combine in Byron's art with his firm belief in reason: realistic tendencies prevail in his works of the later period.

And I will war, at least in words (and — should

My chance so happen — deeds), with all who war
With Thought; and of Thought's foes by far most rude,
Tyrants and sycophants¹ have been and are.

("Don Juan")

In spite of his pessimism, Byron's verse embodies the aspirations of the English workers, Irish peasants, Spanish partisans, Italian Carbonari, Albanian and Greek patriots, and encouraged the struggle against the social evils of the time.

Belinsky said that these contradictions in Byron's poetry mirror the contradictory character of the English democratic movement as a whole.

Byron's flaming characters, his beautiful pictures of nature and his brilliant satirical power, coupled with his rich and melodious verse, appeal to us and, no doubt, will be admired by many generations to come.

¹ sycophant ['sɪkəfənt] — one who attempts to advance himself by flattering persons of influence.

George
Gordon Byron

(1788—1824)

"He who loves not his country,
can love nothing."

BYRON



Byron in Greek dress.

"...I will teach, if possible, the stones to rise against earth's tyrants...", exclaimed Byron in his greatest work "Don Juan".

The poet was a real fighter; he struggled against despotism with both pen and sword. Freedom was the cause that he served all his life.

Like all the romantic writers of his time, Byron was disappointed with the results of the French Revolution; but unlike the Lake Poets who condemned their former beliefs and tried to escape from reality into the world of dreams and mysticism, he remained true to the ideas of liberty and equality.

The lines from "Childe Harold",

"Yet, Freedom! yet thy banner, torn, but flying,
Streams like the thunder-storm *against* the wind;"

appealed to all freedom-loving people.

His Life and Work

George Gordon Byron was born in London, on January 22, 1788, in an impoverished aristocratic family. His mother, Catherine Gordon, was a Scottish lady of honourable birth and respectable fortune. After having run through his own and most of his wife's fortune, his father, an army officer, died when the future poet was only three years old.

George was very lonely from early childhood. His mother was a woman of quick feelings and strong passions. Now she kissed him, now she scolded him. In one of her fits of passion she called him "a lame brat",¹ and the boy could not bring himself to forgive him this insult. He was lame from birth and was sensitive about it all his life, yet, thanks to his strong will and regular training, he became an excellent rider, a champion swimmer, a boxer and took part in athletic exercises.

Byron spent the first ten years of his life in Scotland. He was fond of the rocky coast and mountains of the country. His admiration of natural scenery was reflected in many of his poems. He attended grammar school in Aberdeen [ˌæbəˈdiːn]. The boy "devoured" books of travel, especially those relating to the East. These books greatly influenced his poetical development.

In 1798 George's grand-uncle died and the boy inherited the title of baron and the family estate of the Byrons, Newstead Abbey, in Nottinghamshire. Together with his mother and nurse, May Gray, to whom he was deeply attached, the boy moved to Newstead, from where he was sent to Harrow School; at seventeen he entered Cambridge University.

George was sixteen when he fell in love with his distant relative Mary Chaworth, and in her his youthful imagination seemed to have found the ideal of womanly perfection. She did not, however, return his affection. But the memory of his first love clung to Byron throughout his life and coloured much of his writing. In the first canto of "Childe Harold's Pilgrimage" the poet sings that he (Harold) "sighed to many, though he loved but one". Mary Chaworth was the one the poet loved.

Byron's need for love and sympathy, his desire to help and protect, were evident from his boyhood. In 1805 he saved one of his friends from drowning. Later, when in Spain, he sent back to England two of his servants, giving instructions that one of them should be properly educated at his own (Byron's) expense. Many people whom he helped never knew from whom the money came.

¹ brat (*Scottish*) — a small child (generally used contemptuously).

While a student, Byron published his first collection of poems "Hours of Idleness" (1807). It was mercilessly attacked by a well-known critic in the magazine "Edinburgh Review". The author suggested that Byron should not write any more poems in future. Wounded to the quick, Byron decided to take his revenge. A whole year was spent in preparation of a reply, which was published in 1809 under the title of "English Bards and Scotch Reviewers". In this satirical poem, which is really criticism in verse, Byron makes a wide survey of contemporary literary life.

In the spring of 1808 Byron graduated from the University and received his M. A. (Master of Arts) degree, and next year took his hereditary seat in the House of Lords.

In 1809 he left England on a long journey, which took two years. He visited Portugal, Spain, Albania, Greece, and Turkey, and during his travels wrote the first two cantos of "Childe Harold's Pilgrimage". At that time, in a letter to a friend, he wrote: "Embarrassed in my private affairs, indifferent to the public, solitary without the wish to be social, with a body affected by a succession of fevers, but a spirit, I trust, yet unbroken, I am returning home without a hope and almost without a desire." After an absence of two years the poet returned to England.

On February 27, 1812, Byron made his first speech in the House of Lords. He spoke passionately in defence of the English proletariat and blamed the government for the unbearable conditions of the life of the workers:

"[...] I have traversed the seat of war in the Peninsula,¹ I have been in some of the most oppressed provinces of Turkey; but never under the most despotic infidel² government did I behold such squalid³ wretchedness as I have seen since my return in the very heart of a Christian country [...]."

The poet expressed his indignation at the bill which had been introduced into Parliament in order to sanction the death-sentence for frame-breaking:⁴

"[...] Setting aside the palpable⁵ injustice and the certain inefficiency of the bill, are there not capital punishments sufficient in your statutes? Is there not blood enough upon your penal code, that more must be poured forth to ascend to Heaven and testify against you?"

¹ the Peninsula [penˈɪnsjələ] — Spain.

² infidel [ˈɪnfɪdəl] — not believing in Christianity.

³ squalid [ˈskwəlɪd] — poor and dirty.

⁴ frame-breaking — machine-breaking.

⁵ palpable [ˈpælpəbl] — clear to the mind.

"How will you carry the bill into effect? Can you commit a whole county to their own prisons? Will you erect a gibbet in every field, and hang up men like scarecrows? [...]"

"[...] But suppose it passed; suppose one of these men, as I have seen them, — meagre with famine, sullen with despair, careless of a life which your Lordships are perhaps about to value at something less than the price of a stocking-frame; — suppose this man surrounded by the children for whom he is unable to procure bread at the hazard of his existence, about to be torn for ever from a family which he lately supported in peaceful industry, and which it is not his fault that he can no longer so support; — suppose this man, and there are ten thousand such from whom you may select your victims, dragged into court, to be tried for this new offence, by this new law; still, there are two things wanting to convict and condemn him: and these are, in my opinion, — twelve butchers for a jury, and a Jeffreys¹ for a judge."²

Later the poet again raised his voice in defence of the oppressed workers, encouraging them to fight for freedom in his "Song for the Luddites" (1816):

As the Liberty lads ov'r the sea
Bought their freedom, and cheaply, with blood,
So we, boys, we
Will *die* fighting, or *live* free,
And down with all kings but King Ludd!

In 1812 the first two cantos of "Childe Harold's Pilgrimage" were published. They were received with a burst of enthusiasm by his contemporaries and Byron became one of the most popular men in London. Walter Scott declared that for more than a century no work had produced a greater effect. The author himself remarked: "I awoke one morning and found myself famous."

Between 1813 and 1816 Byron composed his "Oriental Tales". "The Giaour [ˈdʒaʊə]", "The Corsair [ˈkɔːsə]", "Lara", and others. These tales embody the poet's romantic individualism. The hero of each poem is a rebel against society. He is a man of strong will and passion. Proud and independent, he rises against tyranny and injustice to gain his personal freedom and happiness. His revolt, however, is too individualistic, and therefore it is doomed to failure.

¹ Jeffreys — (1644—1689), English judge known for the great number of men he condemned to death.

² "Speech during the debate on the frame-work bill in the House of Lords, February 27, 1812."

These romantic poems were particularly admired by Byron's contemporaries and called forth a new mode of thought and feeling called "Byronism". They also gave rise to a new hero, a hero solitary and gloomy, involved in a single-handed struggle against oppression.

"THE CORSAIR"

"The Corsair" (1814) has all the features typical of Byron's early romantic poems. Its composition is fragmentary, that is, it consists of disconnected episodes, and the reader has to use his imagination in order to supply the parts of the narrative that the author has left out.

The struggle between Conrad, a pirate chief in the Aegean [ɪˈdʒiːən] Sea, and Seyd, the Turkish Pasha, motivates the plot of the poem, but the main interest lies in the character of Conrad. The English critic and historian Thomas Babington Macaulay (1800—1859) defined a hero of this type as "a man proud, moody, cynical, with defiance on his brow, and misery in his heart, a scorner of his kind, implacable in revenge, yet capable of deep and strong affection". Such is Conrad, a typical romantic hero, ready to revolt, but the final aim of his protest is vague. Other characters, including his beloved, the gentle Medora, and the fiery-tempered slave-girl Gulnare are touched upon slightly; but in the final count, they are needed mainly to stress some aspects of Conrad's complex and many-sided nature.

But who that Chief? his name on every shore
Is famed and fear'd — they ask and know no more.
With these he mingles not but to command;
Few are his words, but keen his eye and hand.

.....
"Steer to that shore!" — they sail. "Do this!" — 'tis done.
"Now form and follow me!" — the spoil is won.
Thus prompt his accents and his actions still,
And all obey and few inquire his will.

(Canto I, Stanza 2)

That man of loneliness and mystery,
Scarce seen to smile, and seldom heard to sigh;
Whose name appals the fiercest of his crew,
And tints each swarthy cheek with sallow hue;

.....
What should it be, that thus their faith can bind?
The power of Thought — the magic of the Mind!

(Canto I, Stanza 8)

There was a laughing Devil in his sneer,
That raised emotions both of rage and fear;
And where his frown of hatred darkly fell,
Hope withering fled, and Mercy sigh'd farewell!

(Canto I, Stanza 9)

His heart was form'd for softness — warp'd¹ to wrong;
Betray'd too early, and beguiled² too long;
Each feeling pure — as falls the dropping dew
Within the grot³ — like that had harden'd too;
Less clear, perchance, its earthly trials pass'd,
But sunk, and chill'd and petrified at last.

(Canto III, Stanza 23)

In describing Conrad, Byron puts forth a concept of human character popular among the Progressive Romanticists: at a time when human individuality was being obliterated by the bourgeois way of life, the romanticists saw great value in men whose souls were ruled by some strong passion, even a wicked one. The capacity to experience an intense emotion was looked upon as a means of protest against the hateful, everyday life. Such views later led to individualism in world literature; Pushkin was the first to condemn this type of human character in his "Gypsies".

"Hebrew Melodies", a collection of lyrical verses which appeared in 1815, confirmed Byron's popularity. One of the most beautiful poems of the cycle is

MY SOUL IS DARK

My soul is dark — oh! quickly string
The harp I yet can brook to hear;
And let thy gentle fingers fling
Its melting murmurs o'er mine ear.
If in this heart a hope be dear,
That sound shall charm it forth again:
If in these eyes there lurk a tear,
'Twill flow, and cease to burn my brain.
But bid the strain be wild and deep,
Nor let notes of joy be first:

¹ to warp [wɔ:p] — to change, to turn.

² to beguile [br'gaɪl] — to cheat, to deceive.

³ grot (= grotto) — a cave

I tell thee, minstrel, I must weep,
Or else this heavy heart will burst,
For it hath been by sorrow nursed,
And ached in sleepless silence long;
And now 'tis doom'd to know the worst,
And break at once — or yield to song.

In 1815 Byron married Miss Isabella Milbanke. She was a religious woman, cold and pedantic. It was an unlucky match.

Though Byron was fond of their only child Augusta [ɔ:'gastə] Ada, and did not want to break up the family, separation was inevitable. The scandal around the divorce was enormous. Byron's enemies found their opportunity, and used it to the utmost against him. It goes without saying that the "immorality" he was accused of was a pretext. The real cause of the feeling of ill-will towards the poet was his protest against oppression. He described his position in the following words: "I felt that if what was whispered and muttered and murmured was true, I was unfit for England; if false, England was unfit for me." Accordingly, on the 25th of April, 1816, he left England for what proved to be forever. Byron went to Switzerland. Here he made the acquaintance of Shelley, and the two poets became close friends.

While in Switzerland, Byron wrote the third canto of "Childe Harold's Pilgrimage" (1816), "The Prisoner of Chillon" [ʃi:ʒɒŋ] (1816), the dramatic poem "Manfred" (1817), and many lyrics. "The Prisoner of Chillon" describes the tragic fate of the Swiss revolutionary Bonnivard, who spent many years of his life in prison together with his brothers.

In 1817 Byron left for Italy. He visited Venice, Ravenna [rə'venəl], Pisa [ˈpi:zə], and Genoa [ˈdʒenouəl]. The political situation in Italy at this period (with its numerous petty states despotically governed) was such as to rouse his indignation. He longed to see the country one and undivided, in accordance with the aspirations of the Italian patriots. To act on this idea, the poet joined the secret organization of the Carbonari, engaged in the struggle against the Austrian oppressors.

The Italian period (1817—1823), influenced by revolutionary ideas, may be considered to be the summit of Byron's poetical career. Such works as "Beppo" (1818), a humorous poem in a Venetian setting, and his greatest work "Don Juan" (1819—1824) are the most realistic works written by the poet.

Though the action of "Don Juan" takes place at the close of the 18th century, it is easy enough to understand that the author depicts

Europe in the 19th century and gives a broad panorama of contemporary life. There are two heroes in the poem: Don Juan and the poet himself who in his many digressions speaks to the reader, expressing his opinion on different political, social and cultural problems. The poem is remarkable not only for its satirical descriptions and realistic portrayal of life, but also for its revolutionary ideas.

The other notable works of the period are the fourth canto of "Childe Harold's Pilgrimage" (1818); "The Prophecy of Dante" (1821), where, speaking in the person of the great Italian poet Dante, Byron calls upon the Italians to fight for their independence; and the dramas "Marino Faliero" (1820) and "Cain" (1821). During the same period he wrote his satirical masterpieces, "The Vision of Judgment" (1822) and "The Age of Bronze" (1823), devastating and crushing attacks on the reaction brought upon Europe by the Holy Alliance; these two poems form the peak of Byron's achievements in satire, a genre in which he was, perhaps, most powerful.

The defeat of the Carbonari uprising (1822) was a heavy blow to Byron. The war of Greece against the Turks, which had been going on for two years, attracted his attention. Byron longed for action, and went to Greece to take part in the struggle for national independence. Soon after his arrival he was seized with fever and died at Missolonghi on the 18th of April, 1824, at the age of thirty-six. The Greeks desired that his remains should be buried in the country which he had loved not less than his own, and for which he had spent his life, but his friends wanted him to be buried in Westminster Abbey. However, this was refused by the English authorities, and the poet's body, already transported from Greece to England, was buried in the family vault near Newstead. The line "...whose dust was once all fire" from "Childe Harold's Pilgrimage" might well have been used as an epitaph.

"CHILDE HAROLD'S PILGRIMAGE"

"Childe Harold's Pilgrimage" is a huge poem written in Spenserian stanza.¹ Byron himself speaks of it as the most thoughtful and the most comprehensive of his compositions.

As we have already mentioned, the poem was written during different periods of Byron's life. As a whole it makes rather difficult reading: its composition seems chaotic, there is no real "story" in it, the hero, Childe Harold, is very often absent from the pages of the poem, and in Canto IV practically vanishes. It is more a travelling

¹ See page 78.

diary of Byron himself than a continuous narrative concerning the hero. But all this was done by the author intentionally. Let's try to understand his aim.

The hero of the poem is the first one of this type to appear in world literature. A young aristocrat, disappointed in life, satiated with pleasures, he goes travelling, and hopes to find happiness among people who are not spoiled by civilization.

Whilome in Albion's isle there dwelt ¹ a youth,
Who ne ² in virtue's ways did take delight;
But spent his days in riot most uncouth, ³
And vex'd with mirth the drowsy ear of Night.
Ah, me! in sooth ⁴ he was a shameless wight, ⁵
.....
Few earthly things found favour in his sight.
.....

(Canto I, Stanza 2)

Harold's character was understood by the poet's contemporaries, as he expressed their spirit of dissatisfaction, their protest against existing reality, and their dreams of happiness.

At the time of the first appearance of the poem, many people believed that Byron's own character was presented in the person of Childe Harold, but the author denied it: he justly considered himself to be an active fighter for freedom, while Harold was merely a passive onlooker. However, Harold's critical attitude towards English aristocratic society, his wanderings, personal observations and love for his native land reflect Byron's own feelings, views and experiences.

The first canto shows Portugal and Spain. Byron voices his surprise at the contrast between the splendour of the land, where "fruits of fragrance blush on every tree", and the poverty of the people.

Oh, Christ! It is a goodly sight to see
What Heaven hath done for this delicious land:
What fruits of fragrance blush on every tree!

¹ Whilome [ˈwaɪləm] in Albion's [ˈælbjənz] isle there dwelt... -- Once in England there lived ...

² ne (old use) -- not.

³ uncouth [ʌnˈkuːθ] -- rude.

⁴ in sooth (old use) -- in truth.

⁵ wight (old use) -- creature.

What goodly prospects o'er the hills expand!
But man would mar them with an impious hand!

(Stanza 15)

In the Spanish scenes the poet shows the struggle of the people against Napoleon's invasion which the poet witnessed during his journey in Spain in 1809—1810. Byron sympathizes with the Spanish people who were fighting for their freedom and independence and blames the ruling classes, who betray the interests of the country.

Awake, ye ¹ sons of Spain! awake! advance!
Lo! Chivalry, your ancient goddess; cries,
But wields not, as of old, her thirsty lance,
Nor shakes her crimson plumage in the skies:
Now on the smoke of blazing bolts ² she flies,
And speaks in thunder through yon engine's ³ roar!
In every peal she calls — "Awake, arise!"
Say, is her voice more feeble than of yore, ⁴
When her war-song was heard on Andalusia's shore?

(Stanza 37)

Haunted by loneliness, Harold travels all over the world.

It is not love, it is not hate,
Nor low Ambition's honours lost,
That bids me loathe my present state,
And fly from all I prized the most:
What Exile from himself can flee?
To zones, though more and more remote,
Still, still pursues, where'er I be,
The blight of life ⁵ — the demon Thought.

What is the worst? Nay, do not ask —
In pity from the search forbear:
Smile on — nor venture to unmask
Man's heart, and view the Hell that's there.

(Stanza 84)

¹ ye (*old use*) — you.

² blazing bolts — *metaphor for* "fiery bullets".

³ yon (or yonder, *old use*) engine's — that cannon's

⁴ of yore [jɔ:] — in times long past.

⁵ The blight of life — The ruin of life.

The second canto is devoted to Albania and Greece.

Describing Harold's stay in Albania, Byron describes his own adventures in the country. He admires the Albanians for their kindness, generosity and hospitality. The poet praises the great men of the past, the well-known Albanian champion of liberty Scanderbeg, in particular.

The motif of disappointment is sounded with great force when Harold comes to Greece. The miserable state of the Greek people who suffer under the yoke of the Turks arouses Byron's indignation and makes him recall the glorious past of "Fair Greece" and "the gallant spirit" of the "hopeless warriors" (Stanza 73) who gave up their lives for the freedom of the country.

Deep love for the Greeks and concern for their fate sound in the poet's passionate appeal to the people to rise in arms against the oppressors.

Fair Greece! sad relic of departed worth!
Immortal, though no more; though fallen, great!
Who now shall lead thy scatter'd children forth,
And long accustom'd bondage uncreate?
Not such thy sons who whilome did await,
The hopeless warriors of a willing doom,
In bleak Thermopylæ's ¹ sepulchral strait —
Oh, who that gallant spirit shall resume,
Leap from Eurotas' ² banks, and call thee from the tomb?

(Stanza 73)

From the sufferings of the people Byron comes to the personal sorrows of his hero.

What is the worst of woes that wait on age?
What stamps the wrinkle deeper on the brow?
To view each loved one blotted from life's page,
And be alone on earth, as I am now.

(Stanza 98)

The third canto begins and ends with the touching address of Byron to his daughter Ada, whom he was never destined to see again.

Is thy face like thy mother's, my fair child!
Ada! sole daughter of my house and heart?

¹ Thermopylæ's [θəˈmɒpɪliːz] strait is a pass leading from northern to central Greece. In 480 B. C. it was held by 300 Spartans against the Persians until their heroic defence was broken by treachery.

² Eurotas [juˈrɒtəs] — a river in southern Greece.

When last I saw thy young blue eyes, they smiled,
And then we parted,
(Stanza 1)

My daughter! with thy name this song begun —
My daughter! with thy name thus much shall end —
I see thee not, I hear thee not, — but none
Can be so wrapt¹ in thee;
(Stanza 115)

The political and biographical sketches which the third canto contains show greater maturity in the poet's outlook. While crossing Belgium, Harold visited the field of Waterloo, where the great battle had been fought less than a year before. The poet meditates on this historical event.

His attitude to Napoleon is complex. On the one hand, Byron rightly considered him a tyrant, and a traitor to the French Revolution; on the other, he understood that the reactionary forces which defeated Napoleon brought much greater oppression to the nations of Europe. Moreover, Byron could not help admiring some traits of Napoleon's personality. "The Man of Destiny", as he was called, in Byron's opinion had certain points of resemblance to the demonic heroes the poet liked to depict in his romantic poems.

The beautiful scenery of Switzerland makes Byron recall the great French writers and philosophers, Rousseau and Voltaire, who used to live in Geneva, and whose progressive ideas prepared the way for the French Revolution.

The fourth canto, which has to do with Italy, is usually regarded as the finest. It describes people and events in ancient Italian history. Byron regrets the fall of the free states, their high culture and art.

I stood in Venice, on the Bridge of Sighs;
A palace and a prison on each hand:
I saw from out the wave her structures rise
As from the stroke of the enchanter's wand:
A thousand years their cloudy wings expand
Around me, and a dying glory smiles
O'er the far times when many a subject land
Look'd to the wingéd Lion's marble piles,
Where Venice sate in state, throned on her hundred isles!

(Stanza 1)

¹ wrapt — attached (to).

In Venice, Tasso's¹ echoes are no more,
And silent rows the songless gondolier;
Her palaces are crumbling to the shore,
And music meets not always now the ear:
Those days are gone — but Beauty still is here.
States fall, arts fade — but Nature doth not die,
.

(Stanza 3)

Byron calls Italy the "Mother of Arts" and admires the Italian people who have given the world such men as Dante, Petrarch, Boccaccio, and other titans of art, science and literature. He hopes that the former glory of the country can be taken as a pledge (promise) of her future prosperity.

Great as thou art, yet parallel'd by those,
Thy countrymen, before thee born to shine,
The Bards of Hell and Chivalry: first rose
The Tuscan Father's² Comedy Divine;
Then, not unequal to the Florentine,
The southern Scott,³ the minstrel who call'd forth
A new creation with his magic line,
And, like the Ariosto of the North,⁴
Sang ladye-love⁵ and war, romance and knightly worth.

(Stanza 40)

Yet, Italy! through every other land:
Thy wrongs⁶ should ring, and shall, from side to side;
Mother of Arts! as once of Arms; thy hand
Was then our guardian, and is still our guide,
.

(Stanza 47)

A great part of the fourth canto is dedicated to the theme of genius and immortality. Byron puts forth the idea that true glory is achieved by creative activity, and not by illustrious birth and power: thus

¹ Torquato Tasso [ˈtæsou] — Italian poet (1544—1595).

² Tuscan Father — Dante Alighieri (1265—1321), the greatest of Italian poets, author of the "Divine Comedy", creator of the Italian literary language from the Tuscan dialect spoken in Florence at the time.

³ the southern Scott — Byron calls the writer Lodovico Ariosto [ˌæriˈɒstou] "the southern Scott" because they were both masters of the romantic poem.

⁴ the Ariosto of the North — Byron has in mind the writer Walter Scott, see page 222.

⁵ ladye (old spelling) — lady.

⁶ wrongs — injuries (done to Italy).

Alphonso d'Este, the once great Duke of Ferrara, is remembered only because he ill-treated and imprisoned the great poet Torquato Tasso, and it is the latter who has gained true immortality.

Byron exposes the reactionaries of the time and expresses his belief in the final victory of the Italian people in their struggle for liberty.

The merit of "Childe Harold's Pilgrimage" is in its revolutionary spirit, in its broad critical survey of contemporary life and vivid pictures of nature, now peaceful and calm, now stormy and violent, that mirror the poet's own turbulent feelings.

The Soviet writer Anatoli Vinogradov called "Childe Harold's Pilgrimage" "a political geography in verse". The remark is to the point; for the poet lays before our eyes a vast panorama of different countries, and discourses on their social and political state. The poem which at first seems chaotic, is really constructed with great skill; its various episodes are joined by the outlook, experiences and impressions of Childe Harold, and because of that, inner unity is achieved. "Childe Harold's Pilgrimage" is really a philosophical treatise on the nature of wars, and Byron leads us to the conclusion that only wars fought for national or social liberation can be called just and praiseworthy. And it is precisely this idea that, in the final count, heals Childe Harold of his grief and brings about the rebirth of his soul.

Exercises

1. Tell the story of Byron's life.
2. Quote lines where Byron calls forth people to struggle for freedom and independence.
3. What caused the note of grief in Byron's poetry? Indicate lines expressive of the poet's gloomy mood.
4. Speak on the attitude of the poet towards nature. Find lines from "Childe Harold's Pilgrimage" where Byron's admiration of nature is expressed with great force.
5. What were the main characters of the "Oriental Tales"?
6. Why does the poet call Italy "Mother of Arts"?
7. Is Childe Harold an autobiographical character? What was Byron's opinion on the subject?
8. Why do we consider Byron to be a real fighter for freedom?
9. How did Belinsky explain the contradictory character of Byron's poetry?
10. Which of Byron's lyrical poems were translated into Russian by Lermontov? Compare the translation with the original.

Percy Bysshe

Shelley

(1792—1822)



"Poets are the trumpets which sing to battle; poets are the unacknowledged legislators of the world."

SHELLEY

Percy Bysshe Shelley was the most progressive poet among the Revolutionary Romanticists in English literature.

Like Byron, he combines in his poetry the romantic elements typical of the period with a revolutionary protest against the growing power of capitalism.

Shelley describes the gloomy reaction of the time:

Rulers who neither see, nor feel, nor know,

.....
A people starved and stabbed in the untilled field,
Golden¹ and sanguine² laws which tempt and slay;

.....

("England in 1819")

Revolt against all existing laws and customs; revolt against all forms of religion; courage and readiness to act upon what he considered the right principles; extreme generosity; all-embracing love for mankind — these are the characteristic features of the poet, and they are reflected in his works.

¹ golden — here mercenary.

² sanguine ['sæŋɡwɪn] — bloody.

Shelley foretold a happy future for humanity. He believed that the day would come when the people of this world would be free from their dark slavery. He was the first poet in English literature to portray the common people as the only force capable of changing the existing order of life, and to them,

'Men of England, heirs of Glory,
Heroes of unwritten story,'

the poet addresses his passionate appeal to overthrow their oppressors:

'Rise like Lions after slumber
In unvanquishable¹ number,
Shake your chains to earth like dew
Which in sleep had fallen on you —
Ye are many — they are few.'

("The Mask of Anarchy", XXXVII, XXXVIII)

For his revolutionary ideas and firm belief in the happy future of humanity Frederick Engels called Shelley a prophet, and Karl Marx spoke of him as of "a socialist from top to toe".

His Life and Work

Percy Bysshe Shelley was born on the 4th of August, 1792, in Sussex. Like Byron, he came from an aristocratic family, and broke away from his class. His father was a baronet, and a narrow-minded man. The boy felt ill at ease in his family, and at Eton College where he was sent to in 1804. He was a shy, gentle, kind and sensitive boy by nature, but he had his own notions of justice, independence and freedom. At Eton the boy promptly rebelled against the brutal fagging² system, then tolerated in English public schools. The teachers disliked him for his independent thinking. He was called "Mad Shelley" or "Shelley — the atheist".

In 1810 Shelley entered Oxford. A year later he wrote an anti-religious pamphlet called "The Necessity of Atheism", for which he was expelled from the University. The same year he was disinherited by his father.

In 1813 Shelley published his first great poem, "Queen Mab", containing sharp criticism of human society, past and present, and

expressing his ideals as to the happy future of mankind, to be brought about by peaceful means.

Almost the same idea of "bloodless revolution" is expressed in "The Revolt of Islam [ʻɪzləm]" (1818), a poem about the leaders of the revolt, Loam and Cythna, who sacrificed their lives for the cause of freedom. Though at that time Shelley had not yet realized the necessity of armed struggle, and advocated the bloodless dethronement of oppressors, the plot of the poem was inspired by the ideas of the French Revolution, which he supported with all his heart.

For the poems directed against "all the oppressions which are done under the sun" Shelley received the reputation of being "a dangerous man" and was ostracized by society. Life in England became unbearable and the poet left his native country, which he was destined never to see again.

In 1818 Shelley went to Italy. After wandering over the country he finally settled in Pisa, beloved of so many English poets. There he found comfort in the friendship of Byron, who admired his verses, and spoke of Shelley as the most gentle and amiable person he had ever met. The great works of art and the rich colouring of Italy gave new life to Shelley's poetic genius. Most of his best works were written under a southern sky during the last years of his short life.

A thorough study of social and political conditions helped Shelley to realize the inconsistency of the theory of "bloodless revolution" and to understand the necessity of violence as the only means of abolishing tyranny. "The Cenci [ʻtʃentʃɪ]" (1819) is the first of the poet's works where this idea is clearly expressed. Shelley's considerable dramatic power is manifested in this tragedy, based on an Italian murder story of the 16th century. In the preface to "The Cenci" Shelley writes:

"On my arrival at Rome I found that the story of the Cenci was a subject not to be mentioned in Italian society without awakening a deep and breathless interest [...]. The story is, that an old man having spent his life in debauchery and wickedness, conceived at length an implacable hatred towards his children [...]. His daughter Beatrice [ʻbrɛtrɪs] "who was evidently a most gentle and amiable being, a creature formed to adorn and be admired", driven to desperation by the monstrous cruelty and violence of her father, Count Cenci, "[...] at length plotted with her mother-in-law and brother to murder their common tyrant. [...] The deed was quickly discovered, and, in spite of the most earnest prayers made to the Pope by the highest persons in Rome, the criminals were put to death. The old man had during his life repeatedly bought his pardon from the Pope for capital crimes of the most enormous and unspeakable kind, at the price of a hundred

¹ unvanquishable — unconquerable.

² fag — a junior boy who has to act as servant to a senior.

thousand crowns; the death therefore of his victims can scarcely be accounted for by the love of justice.”¹

A great lover of man and freedom, a foe of despotism, Shelley voices his sympathy with those who fought the oppressor and boldly faced death. “The Cenci” ranks among those works of the poet which burn with the fire of his genius.

Though far from England, Shelley was always interested in the affairs of his native country. The economic misery and political oppression of the English people grieved and angered the poet. In 1819 he wrote revolutionary songs which show the progress of his world outlook.

In the “Song to the Men of England” (1819) Shelley appeals to the English workers to struggle for their human rights:

SONG TO THE MEN OF ENGLAND

Men of England, wherefore plough
For the lords who lay ye low?
Wherefore weave with toil and care
The rich robes your tyrants wear?

Wherefore feed, and clothe, and save,
From the cradle to the grave,
Those ungrateful drones who would
Drain your sweat — nay, drink your blood?

Wherefore, Bees of England, forge
Many a weapon,² chain, and scourge,
That these stingless drones may spoil
The forced produce of your toil?

Have ye leisure, comfort, calm,
Shelter, food, love's gentle balm?
Or what is it ye buy so dear
With your pain and with your fear?

The seed ye sow, another reaps;
The wealth ye find, another keeps;
The robes ye weave, another wears;
The arms ye forge, another bears.

¹ There is a portrait of Beatrice, painted by the Italian artist Guido Reni [ˈgi:dou ˈreɪni] (1575—1642) during her confinement in prison, a copy of which is at the Hermitage in Leningrad.

² Many weapons.

Sow seed, — but let no tyrant reap;
Find wealth, — let no impostor heap;
Weave robes, — let not the idle wear;
Forge arms, — in your defence to bear.

Shrink to your cellars, holes, and cells;
In halls ye deck, another dwells.
Why shake the chains ye wrought? Ye see
The steel ye tempered glance on ye.

With plough and spade, and hoe and loom,
Trace your grave, and build your tomb,
And weave your winding-sheet, till fair
England be your sepulchre.

The same theme of revolt is heard in the poems: “The Mask of Anarchy” (1819), “England in 1819” (1819), “Ode to Liberty” (1820), and many others.

THE MASK OF ANARCHY

(fragment)

XXXVII

‘Men of England, heirs of Glory,
Heroes of unwritten story,
Nurslings of one mighty Mother,
Hopes of her, and one another!

XXXVIII

‘Rise like Lions after slumber,
In unvanquishable number,
Shake your chains to earth like dew,
Which in sleep had fall’n on you —
Ye are many — they are few.

XXXIX

‘What is Freedom? — ye can tell
That which Slavery is, too well —
For its very name has grown
To an echo of your own.

XL

'Tis to work, and have such pay
As just keeps life from day to day
In your limbs, as in a cell
For the tyrants' use to dwell:

XLI

'So that ye for them are made
Loom, and plough, and sword, and spade;
With or without your own will, bent
To their defence and nourishment.

XLII

"Tis to see your children weak
With their mothers pine and peak,
When the winter winds are bleak;
They are dying whilst I speak.

XLIII

"Tis to hunger for such diet,
As the rich man in his riot
Casts to the fat dogs that lie
Surfeiting beneath his eye.

XLVI

"Tis to be a slave in soul,
And to hold no strong control
Over your own wills, but be
All that others make of ye."

When the Chartist Movement began to develop, Shelley became one of the most popular poets of the time. During demonstrations the workers marched along the streets, singing his revolutionary songs.

One of Shelley's best works is his lyrical drama "Prometheus Unbound" (1820). The plot is a variation on the theme of "Prometheus Bound", a tragedy by Aeschylus [i:skiləs] (525—

456 B. C.). According to Greek myths, Prometheus stole the gods' fire from Olympus, and brought it down to mankind. For this Jove [dʒouv], father of the gods, chained Prometheus to a rock over a precipice, and subjected him to everlasting torture.

In Shelley's drama Prometheus symbolizes the human mind and will. His captivity means that both the mind of man and man himself are enslaved. Shelley's hero does not seek a reconciliation with Jove. He suffers terrible tortures but does not submit:

No change, no pause, no hope! Yet I endure.
I ask the Earth, have not the mountains felt?
I ask yon Heaven, the all-beholding Sun,
Has it not seen? The Sea, in storm or calm,
Heaven's ever-changing Shadow, spread below,
Have its deaf waves not heard my agony?
Ah me! alas, pain, pain ever, for ever!

(Act 1)

Prometheus is helped by the innumerable forces of nature. The Spirit of the Earth, Demogorgon — the symbol of revolution, and the other good spirits cast Jove out of Olympus into oblivion. Prometheus is unbound, the human mind is free, the world of men passes from chaos to unlimited progress. The forces of nature symbolize the common people, who overthrow all forms of tyranny and become free and happy.

The poet was a revolutionary both in his political outlook and poetical style.

Shelley was also the author of many lyrical poems of rare beauty and emotional power. Though some of his verses are rather sad, the motif of "world sorrow" is alien to him. Shelley was an optimist. He regarded the world and nature as ever in development. He ends his "Ode to the West Wind" ("O wild West Wind, thou breath of Autumn's being,") with the famous line:

"If Winter comes, can Spring be far behind?"

The poet was inspired by love: a love not limited to mankind, but extending to every living creature, to animals and flowers, to the whole of nature; his very being is fused and blended in nature. He becomes one with the lark ("To a Skylark"), with the cloud ("The Cloud"), and the west wind ("Ode to the West Wind").

TO A SKYLARK

(fragment)

What thou art we know not;
What is most like thee?
From rainbow clouds there flow not
Drops so bright to see
As from thy presence showers a rain of melody.
Like a Poet hidden
In the light of thought,
Singing hymns unbidden,¹
Till the world is wrought
To sympathy with hopes and fears it heeded not.

THE CLOUD

(fragment)

I bring fresh showers for the thirsting flowers,
From the seas and the streams;
I bear light shade for the leaves when laid
In their noonday dreams.
From my wings are shaken the dews that waken
The sweet buds every one,
When rocked to rest on their mother's breast,
As she dances about the sun.
I wield the flail of the lashing hail,
And whiten the green plains under,
And then again I dissolve it in rain,
And laugh as I pass in thunder.

Shelley's rich imagination, his power of rhythmical expression, his passion for liberty make his poetry unexcelled. He brought the melody of verse to a degree of perfection unknown in English poetry before him. To Shelley poetry was a device for making immortal all that is good and beautiful in the world. He had the key to the hidden mysteries of the heart, of life itself.

Great as Shelley's fame is now, it should be remembered that it was entirely posthumous. He received practically no encouragement during his lifetime.

¹ unbidden (*old use*) — not ordered, not asked for.

On July 8, 1822, while Shelley and a friend of his were sailing in a small boat across the Bay of Spezia l'spetsiæl, near Genoa, a sudden and violent storm broke out. Ten days later their bodies were found washed ashore. They were cremated on the spot, and, according to some accounts, the poet's wife, Mary, snatched her husband's heart from out of the ashes. The heart was buried in the Protestant cemetery in Rome. The inscription on his tombstone reads: "Percy Bysshe Shelley, COR CORDIUM" (The Heart of Hearts).

Exercises

1. Tell the story of Shelley's life.
2. What are the characteristic features of Shelley as a poet?
3. What social idea does Shelley develop in his early works? Name these works.
4. How do Shelley's revolutionary ideas develop in his later poetical works?
5. Tell the stories upon which the following works are based: a) "The Cenci"; b) "Prometheus Unbound". How did these plots serve Shelley's revolutionary ideas?
6. Give a short account of the ideas expressed in the "Song to the Men of England".
7. Why may Shelley be called the standard-bearer of Revolutionary Romanticism? Refer to "The Mask of Anarchy".
8. What is the secret of the musical charm in Shelley's lyrical pieces? Illustrate your answer with lines from his lyrical poems.

Sir Walter Scott

(1771—1832)



His Life and Work

Sir Walter Scott, the first great writer of historical novels, was born in Edinburgh on August 15, 1771. His father was an Edinburgh lawyer who descended from the fighting and riding clan of Buccleuch [bə'klu:]. He was the first of his clan to live in a city and practise a profession. He had a large family. Walter, the future writer, was the ninth of his twelve children. When not yet two years old, the boy fell ill with a disease that left him lame for life. His parents thought country air would be good for him, so they sent him to his grandparents' farm, called Sandy Knowe, a place where there were hills and crags and a ruined tower. Walter soon became a strong boy. In spite of his lameness he climbed the steep hills and rode his Shetland pony at a gallop. Walter's grandparents told him thrilling tales of adventures on the Scottish border and stories of the crumbling abbeys and old castles. He learned to love the solemn history of Scotland and liked to recite Scottish ballads and poems.

When he grew older and went to school, he became very fond of reading: one of his favourite books was a collection of ballads, called "Reliques of Ancient English Poetry", edited by Bishop Percy. At the age of fifteen Scott had a chance to meet Robert Burns.

At the suggestion of his father, Scott became a lawyer and practised for fourteen years. During his business trips he visited places of famous battles and collected old ballads that were still passed on from generation to generation by word of mouth. In his wanderings Scott saw the breaking-up of patriarchal clans, and the many thousands of peasants who streamed along the roads towards the coal and iron regions in the south-west of Scotland to find work. The evils of the past seemed mild to him now when compared with the new oppression. Like many writers belonging to the Romantic trend, Scott, too, felt that all the good days were gone. He wished to record all the historical facts he knew before they were forgotten, and thus pay tribute to the past. Scott's first published work was a translation of Goethe's historical play "Götz von Berlichingen". This work taught Scott that history is made by the people.

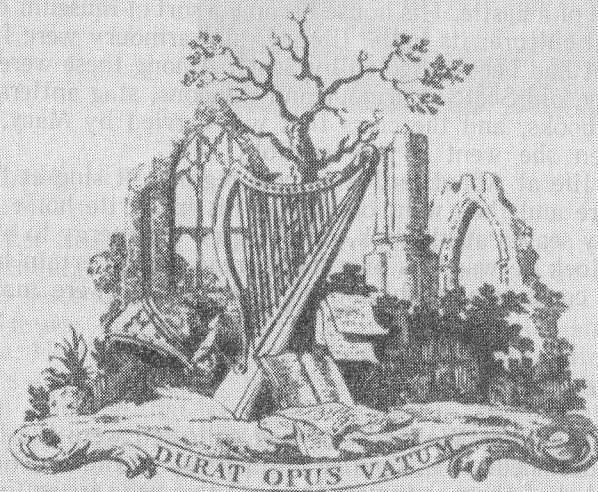
At the age of twenty-six Scott married, and bought a large estate at Abbotsford, not far from Edinburgh. There Scott built a fine house in the style of a castle. His house became a sort of museum of Scottish history and culture: its halls, library, and armoury were full of rare objects that had been collected by Scott. Among these were the purse of Rob Roy, old Scottish armour and weapons, stag antlers, rare pictures and books, and the cross that was carried by Mary, Queen of Scots, when she went to the scaffold.

Scott's life at Abbotsford was most regular. Rising at five, he lit his own fire and then went out to see his favourite horse. At six he was already seated at his desk, devoting all his energy to writing. By twelve o'clock he was "his own man", ready to entertain his friends, who often came to visit him. Among his guests were many famous people.

Scott, the Poet

The folk ballads Walter Scott had collected were the first poetic work he published. It was called "Minstrelsy of the Scottish Border" and consisted of three volumes; the first two were issued in 1802 and the third one in 1803. Soon after, his own romantic poems attracted the attention of the reading public. The best were "The Lay of the Last Minstrel" (1805), "Marmion" (1808), and "The Lady of the Lake" (1810). These poems reproduce old legends and combine them with historical material. They were written with great poetic skill and accompanied by such beautiful descriptions that the poet became very famous. But when Byron's wonderful poems appeared, Scott, to quote his own words, "left the field of poetry to his rival" who by that time was already a friend of his. He took to writing novels. It was not only

RELIQUES
OF
ANCIENT ENGLISH POETRY;
CONSISTING OF
Old Heroic BALLADS, SONGS, and other
PIECES of our earlier POETS,
(Chiefly of the LYRIC kind.)
Together with some few of later Date.
VOLUME THE FIRST.



L O N D O N:
Printed for J. DODSLEY in Pall-Mall.
M DCC LXV.

The title-page of Percy's "Reliques of Ancient English Poetry", 1765, which did much to revive interest in the older 'romantic' poetry.

a new beginning, it marked a new period in Scott's creative work. He declined the honour of poet-laureate in 1813 because he understood that writing official verses and odes on the birthdays of members of the royal family would interfere with his creative work.

Scott, the Novelist

In 1814 Scott published his "Waverley [ˈweɪvəlɪ], or 'Tis Sixty Years Since". Because he had an established reputation as a poet, Scott decided to print his first novel anonymously. The book was a great success, and everybody wanted to know who the author was. Scott published many of his novels under the name of "The Author of Waverley", but finally the secret leaked out. During the next seventeen years (from 1815 till 1832) Scott wrote more than twenty-five novels and many stories and tales besides.

In 1818 he accepted the offer of a baronetcy. Surrounded by his large family, he looked like the chief of a new clan.

Scott was a hard worker: "... it is with the deepest regret," he wrote about himself, "that I recollect in my manhood the opportunities of learning which I neglected in my youth. Through every part of my literary career I have felt pinched and hampered by my ignorance."

Scott's publisher was John Ballantyne, an Edinburgh bookseller in whose firm Scott was a silent partner.¹ This firm suddenly went bankrupt in 1826, and Scott found himself, at the age of fifty-five, not only penniless but burdened with a debt of £ 130,000. Nobly refusing to permit the creditors of the firm to suffer any loss that he could help, he devoted the rest of his life to the task of repaying this colossal debt. Setting to work on the very day of the failure, he managed, in four years, to pay back £ 70,000. It must be admitted that many of his books at that period were written in a hurry and are inferior to his earlier works. He would have worked on had his health not broken down. His doctors sent him to Italy; but it was too late. Before reaching Italy he had to turn back, and on his arrival at Abbotsford he died.

SCOTT'S NOVELS

For the sake of convenience Scott's works have been divided into three groups.

The first group of novels are those devoted to Scottish history: "Waverley, or 'Tis Sixty Years Since" (1814), "Guy Mannering, or the Astrologer" (1815), "The Antiquary" (1816), "Black Dwarf" (1816),

¹ A silent partner had no voice in management or business.

"Old Mortality"¹ (1816), "Rob Roy" (1817), "The Heart of Midlothian" (1818), "The Bride of Lammermoor" (1819), "A Legend of Montrose" (1819), "Redgauntlet" (1824), "The Fair Maid of Perth" (1828).

The second group of novels refer to English history: "Ivanhoe ['ai-vən-hou]" (1820), the best of this series; "The Monastery" (1820), "The Abbot" (1820), "Kenilworth" (1821), "The Pirate" (1822), "The Fortunes of Nigel" (1822), "Peveril of the Peak" (1822), "Woodstock" (1826).

The third group comprises novels based on the history of Europe: "Quentin Durward" (1823), "The Talisman" (1825), "Count Robert of Paris" (1832), "Anne of Geierstein" (1829), "Castle Dangerous" (1832).

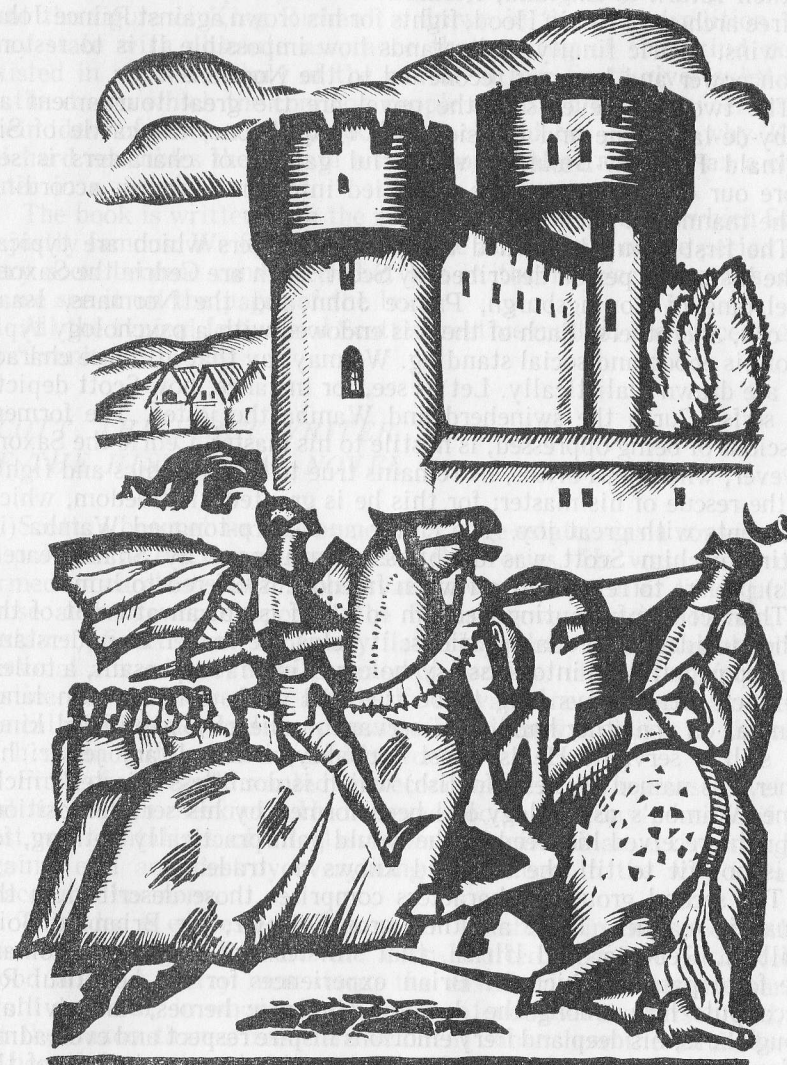
The novel "St. Ronan's Well" (1824) stands in a class by itself. The story is laid at a fashionable health-resort somewhere near the border between England and Scotland. It is the only novel written by Scott about his own time and shows his attitude to contemporary bourgeois society. It is a precursor of the critical realism of the 19th century.

"IVANHOE"

The action of the novel is set in medieval England during the Crusades. The author has introduced characters from all classes of feudal society and has shown how class interests give rise to a bitter struggle. The central conflict of the novel lies in the struggle of the Anglo-Saxon land-owners against the Norman barons, who cannot come to an understanding. The breach between them is widened by their speaking different languages. Scott shows what a wretched thing it is to have no rights in the land of one's birth. There is no peace among the Norman conquerors either. The struggle for power does not cease. Prince John tries to usurp the throne of his brother Richard, at that time engaged in a Crusade. The characters of the two brothers show the two tendencies that caused the Normans to split: one side wished to seize all the land and subdue the Anglo-Saxons completely, while the other tended to co-operate with the remaining Anglo-Saxon land-owners. The latter tendency was progressive, because it led to the birth of a new nation.

At the head of the remaining Anglo-Saxon knights we find a thane, Cedric the Saxon. He hopes to restore their independence by putting a Saxon king and queen on the throne. The queen is to be Rowena [rou'i:nə], a young lady said to be descended from Alfred the Great, and the future king, Athelstane of Coningsburgh. But Cedric has a son, Wilfred of Ivanhoe, who upsets his father's plans by falling

¹ "Old Mortality" is translated into Russian as «Пуритане» and "The Heart of Midlothian" as «Эдинбургские темницы».



A medieval tournament.

in love with Rowena. Cedric disinherits his son, and Ivanhoe goes on a Crusade where he meets King Richard, and they become friends. On their return to England, Richard with the help of the Saxons and the free archers of Robin Hood, fights for his crown against Prince John and wins. Cedric finally understands how impossible it is to restore Saxon power and becomes reconciled to the Normans.

The two chief events of the novel are the great tournament at Ashby-de-la-Zouche and the siege of Torquilstone, the castle of Sir Reginald Front-de-Bœuf. A wonderful gallery of characters is set before our eyes; they may be classified into three groups, according to the manner of their portrayal.

The first group is formed by those characters which are typical of the historical period described by Scott. Such are Cedric the Saxon, Athelstane of Coningsburgh, Prince John and the Normans, Isaac of York, and others. Each of them is endowed with a psychology typical of his epoch and social standing. We may say that all these characters are drawn realistically. Let us see, for instance, how Scott depicts two serfs, Gurth the swineherd and Wamba the jester. The former, conscious of being oppressed, is hostile to his master, Cedric the Saxon; however, when need arises, he remains true to feudal ethics and fights for the rescue of his master; for this he is granted his freedom, which he accepts with great joy. The clever and sharp-tongued Wamba (in writing of him Scott was doubtlessly influenced by Shakespeare's fools) prefers to remain a serf when freedom is offered to him.

This action of granting freedom to a serf is not an attempt of the author to idealize feudal relations; it helps the reader to understand his deep penetration into class psychology. Gurth is a peasant, a toiler, and such men always long to be free and work on their own land. Wamba, on the other hand, is a servant — one of a privileged kind, but still a servant. He is, most probably, a hereditary jester: his father was named Witless (foolish) which is doubtless a jester's nickname. Wamba's psychology has been formed by his servile position, and if he received his freedom, he would gain practically nothing, for he is not fit to till the soil and knows no trade.

The second group of characters comprises those described in the romantic manner. These are the fierce Templar, Sir Brian de Bois-Guilbert, Rebecca, and Ulrica, that sinister and tragic old woman. The fatal passion which Sir Brian experiences for the beautiful Rebecca puts him among the demonic romantic heroes, and, villain though he is, his deep and fiery emotions inspire respect and even admiration in the reader. And the least interesting representatives of the group, as usually happens in Scott's works, are the hero and heroine, Wilfred of Ivanhoe and the Lady Rowena.

The characters of the third group are those created in the folklore tradition. It goes without saying that Robin Hood, Friar Tuck and other outlaws are among their number. But the interesting thing is that the figure of King Richard is drawn in the same tradition. We may state with absolute assurance that a king of that kind never existed in all the history of the world; in him Scott gives substance to the dream which the common people cherished for many centuries: their ideal of what a really good king should be. That is why King Richard resembles the hero of a legend or a ballad rather than a character in a novel.

The book is written with the great descriptive skill for which Scott is justly famous. We feel drawn into the atmosphere of the period and very soon become convinced that life in the 12th century was such as we see it on the pages of the book.

All the typical features of Scott's creative method are concentrated in "Ivanhoe".

SCOTT, THE FIRST WRITER OF THE HISTORICAL NOVEL

Scott, a baronet and the owner of a large estate, was a conservative in politics: at elections he voted for the Tories. He was also a confirmed monarchist, but his conservatism was of a peculiar kind: unlike those authors who supported the British government (Southey, for instance), Scott never wrote any flattering poetry and never acted for personal advantage at the expense of honesty. His feeling for social justice was so sincere that all his life he was honest in word and deed. He called for peace and compromise. This idea was always at the back of his mind: it is felt in all his works.

First of all Scott wanted to reconcile the hostile classes, yet he did not preach meekness. He believed social harmony possible if the best representatives of all classes would unite in an active struggle against evil and destroy everything that stood in the way towards peace and harmony.

This idea is expressed in the novel "Ivanhoe", in the episode when the Norman king, Richard the Lion-Hearted, together with Robin Hood and his merry men storm the castle of the Norman baron, Front-de-Bœuf, in whom all the evils of feudalism are personified, to set the Saxon thanes free. This incident shows how the allied forces of honest men, though from hostile classes, conquer evil.

The second problem that worried Sir Walter was the need to bring peace between the Scots and the English. The oppression of the Scots

under English capitalism drove them, up to the second half of the 18th century, to armed uprisings, to restore Scotland's independence. The Scottish cycle of novels is devoted to finding mutual understanding between the two nations.

But Scott, the writer, contradicted Scott, the idealist. The trend of his novels was determined by the outlook of the common people. Best of all he described those characters who had been oppressed and robbed or made social outcasts and outlaws such as Robin Hood, members of persecuted Highland clans, the sisters Effie and Jennie Deans ("The Heart of Midlothian"), Hayraddin Mograbbinn ("Quentin Durward"), the old beggar-woman Meg Merrilies ("Guy Mannering"), or the strolling mountebank Flibbertigibbet ("Kenilworth"). The fantastic episodes which appear in his works have been inspired by folklore. There is no religious mysticism in them. Their origin lies in popular beliefs. Scott delighted in the picturesque of the Middle Ages, but he did not idealize feudalism. Even if he happened to sympathize with some personages renowned in history as bearers of feudal honour, he could not help showing that historically they were doomed. When describing cruel scenes in uprisings of the people, he draws a conclusion which in his time nobody shared — the conclusion that the people are the main force in history, and that they have the right to decide their own destiny by battle. Scott's historical approach to life was a great new contribution to world literature.

Scott was the creator of the historical genre in literature.

What is a historical novel? How can it be defined? Should it be only about actual events and real historical characters? Not necessarily. The essential thing in showing history as such in a novel is to depict personalities typical of the period and the country described. Sir Walter Scott was the first to do this. That alone makes him immortal.

Scott constructed all his novels after a single model: the story is focussed on the life of certain fictitious characters, usually lovers. The hero and the heroine of the story are separated. Striving to come together, they get involved in historical events and take part in them. They meet famous historical characters who, it happens, play a decisive part in their fate. Then it is for the author to decide whether to make the end happy or unhappy.

For more than a hundred years this pattern has been used by other writers, on the continent as well as in Britain.

Scott was a great master at painting vivid characters, wonderfully individualized and expressive, particularly when it came to the secondary characters. But Scott's greatest artistic achievement was the way he employed details from the everyday life of the epoch for the

sake of social, historical and psychological characterization. Descriptions of interiors, costumes, objects of material culture became under his pen a means of penetrating into the meaning of the events described. A feudal castle or a Highland hut, the ermine mantle of a king or a clanman's tartan, the hilt of a knight's sword or the brass collar of a serf, — they not only tell us of the historical period, but give us a psychological insight into the characters he depicts. Similar descriptions of details may be seen in the novels of the enlighteners, but there they were used mainly for comic effects, while Scott gives his descriptions a social significance.

There is a paradox in the fact that Scott, being a romanticist, brought into world literature one of the chief expressive means of realism.

BELINSKY ON SCOTT

The great Russian critic V. G. Belinsky held Scott in very high esteem, and his opinion of Scott is very important from the general theoretical point of view. Belinsky laid the theoretical foundation of the method of critical realism, the method that brought world fame to Russian literature, and, formulating his views, Belinsky very often (more than seventy times) referred to Scott. Belinsky saw his chief merit in the fact that "Walter Scott has created an absolutely new poetry, the poetry of the prose of life, the poetry of real life".¹ One of Belinsky's principles was that man should be depicted on a social background, for the life of every individual is formed by social factors. Belinsky noted this in the works of Scott. "In his novels Walter Scott has solved the problem of how to connect historical life with personal life... He is as much a novelist and a poet as a historian... To give a historical orientation to the art of the 19th century meant to guess the secret of modern life with the force of genius." It was typical of Belinsky to see that Scott's achievements were not confined to the historical genre as such, but concerned all literature. And although Belinsky condemned Scott for his conservatism, Scott to him was "a second Shakespeare, uniting art and life"; he said that Scott was the equal of Homer, Shakespeare, Goethe, Pushkin and Gogol. Such an opinion may seem to us exaggerated, but the merit of Belinsky lies in the fact that he points out the features in Scott's works that helped in the development of world literature as a whole. If we judge Scott from this point of view, we must agree that Belinsky is absolutely right.

¹ All quotations here are given in V. Rogoff's translation.

Exercises

1. Tell the story of Scott's life.
2. The following themes may be given to pupils for individual reports, or the teacher may discuss each theme in class using the following questions:
 - A. Scott, the writer.
 - 1) Why did Walter Scott collect old ballads and legends?
 - 2) Speak about the subject-matter in Scott's poetry.
 - 3) Say something about the three groups of novels written by Walter Scott.
 - 4) What was peculiar about Scott's conservatism?
 - 5) What chief idea forms the subject-matter in the writer's Scottish cycle of novels?
 - B. The novel "Ivanhoe".
 - 1) Where and when is the scene set?
 - 2) Comment on the conflict of the plot.
 - 3) Dwell on the characters in the novel. Which were the characters created by Scott's historical investigations?
 - 4) Which were the characters created in the romantic manner?
 - 5) Which were the characters created in the folklore tradition?
 - 6) In what social class did the novelist see the motivating force in the struggle for liberty?
 - 7) What was Scott's attitude to the nobles that appear in the novel?
 - C. Scott, the creator of the historical novel.
 - 1) What was Scott's historical approach to life?
 - 2) Mention the most essential feature of the historical novel.
 - 3) What was Scott's model for the historical novel?
 - 4) Why did Scott use so many details in his descriptions?
 - 5) What makes his novels so picturesque? Describe a mass scene from one of Scott's novels which you have read.

Review Questions

I.

1. To what historical events is the Romantic Movement due?
2. Define Romanticism as a humanist movement.
3. What forms of literature were demanded by the new themes for literature which arose out of Romanticism.

4. What trends did Romanticism develop in poetry? Characterize each trend.
5. Who were the Lake Poets? What kind of poetry did they write at the beginning of the French Revolution and during the second period of their creative work?
6. How did the Lake School influence the language of English poetry?

II.

1. What makes Byron a poet of "world sorrow"?
2. Name the works of the poet in which he glorifies the valour of the romantic individual. Why was this type of character popular among Byron's contemporaries?
3. What progressive ideas of the age can be traced in "Childe Harold's Pilgrimage"?
4. What is the poet's attitude towards wars?
5. How did Byron defend the oppressed classes in England?
6. Comment on Byron's influence upon Russian literature. What features are characteristic both of Byron's and Lermontov's poetry?

III.

1. Comment on Shelley as the most revolutionary romanticist of his land.
2. Compare Byron's and Shelley's attitude towards the French Revolution with that of the Lake Poets.
3. Speak about the development of Shelley's progressive views as they are expressed in his poems.
4. Why did Engels call him a prophet?
5. Dwell on Shelley's lyrical poetry, on the beauty of his verse.

IV.

1. What social problems did Scott try to solve in his novels?
2. What was Scott's historical approach to life?
3. On what historical facts is the novel "Ivanhoe" based? With whom does Scott side?
4. Dwell on the typical features of Scott's creative method.
5. Why did Belinsky, who laid the theoretical foundation of the method of critical realism, value and admire Scott's works?

INDEX OF NAMES

- Bacon, Francis** ['frænsɪs] — (1561—1626), English philosopher, essayist and statesman. He believed that a direct approach to nature was the only way to truth; his discoveries marked a new era of human thought.
- Erasmus** ['ræzməs], **Desiderius of Rotterdam** — (1466?—1536), celebrated scholar of the Renaissance. A close friend of Thomas More; he wrote in More's house the famous satire "Praise to Folly". In it kings and princes, bishops and popes alike are shown to be in bondage to Folly, and no class of men is spared. E. paid no attention to dogmas: the purpose of his life was to fight the battle of sound learning and plain common sense against the powers of ignorance and superstition.
- Goethe** ['gə:tə], **Johann Wolfgang** — (1749—1832), German poet, novelist and dramatist. His play "Egmont" and the famous novel "The Sorrows of Young Werther" were representative of the pre-romantic period in German literature. His masterpiece "Faust" made him the greatest of German authors.
- Keats, John** — (1795—1821), England's greatest lyrical poet. His works are a continuation of the best traditions of English Renaissance poetry. Among his best poems are "A Song of Opposites", "Lines on the Mermaid Tavern", "Robin Hood", "La Belle Dame sans Merci", "Ode on a Grecian Urn", "Ode to a Nightingale", "To Autumn". The best known of his longer poems are "Endymion", "Isabella or the Pot of Basil", "The Eve of St. Agnes".
- Meres, Francis** — English critic, author of "Paladis Tamia" (Wits' Treasury), (1596). The work contains critical reflections on art and literature. One chapter, "Comparative Discourse of Our English Poets with the Greek, Latin and Italian Poets", enumerates the English poets from Chaucer to Meres's own day, and in each case a comparison with some ancient author is made. The work served for a long time as a school-book.
- Molière, Jean Baptiste Poquelin** — (1622—1673), great French dramatist, author of comedies, the most celebrated of which are "Tartuffe", "Don Juan", "The Misanthrope", "Georges Dandin", "The Miser", "The Bourgeois Gentleman".
- Montaigne** [mɒn'teɪn], **Michel Eyquem de** — (1533—1592), French philosopher. His famous essays by their humanist ideas and innovations of style opened a new period in French literature.

Servetus, Michael — (1511—1553), Spanish surgeon; became well known for his experiments in dissection and had success as a physician. He also wrote on religion and was accused of heresy not only by the Catholic Church, but also by the leading Reformers of Europe. He was seized in Geneva by Calvin and burnt at the stake.

Swinburne, Algernon ['ældʒənən] **Charles** — (1837—1909), English poet. His best works were a daring challenge to the conventions of his time both in form and subject-matter. His famous book of poems, "Songs Before Sunrise", displays his strong sympathy for liberty and republicanism.

Vesalius, Andreas — (1514—1564), Flemish anatomist; practised dissection of the human body, wrote a work on it and helped to overthrow the old traditions of medical science.

Virgil or Vergil — (70—19 B. C.), great Roman poet. He studied the Greek poets and his first work, "Eclogues", was written after the Greek model. These are pastoral poems describing the beauty of Italian scenes. His "Georgics" are on the art of farming. His third work, the great epic "Aeneid", has for hero the Trojan Aeneas, supposed to be the founder of the Latin nation. V.'s poetry exercised great influence on the literature of the following ages: Dante, Chaucer, Spencer, Milton and many poets of the 19th century owe much to him.

CONTENTS

I. The Middle Ages	7
The Dawn of English Literature	—
"Beowulf"	9
The Story	11
The Language of the Poem	15
Exercises	16
Anglo-Saxon Literature (7th—11th centuries)	17
The Literature of the Norman Period (12th—13th centuries)	20
The Romance, the Fable, and the Fabliau	24
Exercises	26
The Pre-Renaissance Period in England	27
The Literature of the 14th Century	28
Geoffrey Chaucer	31
His Life and Work	—
"The Canterbury Tales"	33
The Prologue	34
Prologue to the Tale of the Canon's Yeoman	36
The Tale of the Canon's Yeoman	37
Second Part of the Tale of the Canon's Yeoman	38
The Pardoner's Tale	43
Chaucer's Contribution to Literature	46
Exercises	47
The Literature of the 15th Century	48
Folk-Songs and Ballads	50
The Robin Hood Ballads	—
"The Nottingham Execution"	52
"Robin Hood and Allan-a-Dale"	54
Maxim Gorky on the Ballads of Robin Hood	57
Exercises	58
Review Questions	59

II. The Renaissance	61
The Renaissance in England: First Period	65
Sir Thomas More	67
His Life and Work	—
"Utopia"	68
The Renaissance in England: Second Period. The Predecessors of Shakespeare	72
Sir Philip Sidney (1554—1586)	73
Edmund Spenser (1552—1599)	74
Theatre and Drama	78
Christopher Marlowe (1564—1593)	81
Shakespeare's Junior Contemporaries	83
Ben Jonson (1573—1637)	84
Exercises	86
William Shakespeare	87
The Life of Shakespeare	89
The Dating of Shakespeare's Plays	94
Shakespeare's Plays	95
Shakespeare's Comedies	—
"Twelfth Night"	96
Shakespeare's Histories	99
The Third Period	105
"Hamlet"	107
"King Lear"	112
The Power of Money as seen in Shakespeare's Works	116
The Sonnets	117
Sonnet LV	118
Sonnet CXLVII	119
The Fourth Period	—
"The Tempest"	120
Shakespeare's Attitude to the People	121
Shakespeare's Immortality	122
Exercises	123
Review Questions	125
III. English Literature During the Bourgeois Revolution	127
John Milton	130
His Life and Work	—
"Paradise Lost"	132
Exercises	134
Review Questions	135

IV. The Enlightenment	137
The Literature of the Period	138
Exercises	141
Daniel Defoe	142
His Life and Work	—
"Robinson Crusoe"	144
The Journal	146
Defoe's Individualism	147
Defoe's Contribution to Literature	149
Exercises	—
Jonathan Swift	150
His Life and Work	—
"Gulliver's Travels"	153
Part 1. A Voyage to Lilliput	154
Part 2. A Voyage to Brobdingnag	158
Part 3. A Voyage to Laputa, Balnibarbi, Luggnagg, Glubdubdrib, and Japan	159
Part 4. A Voyage to the Country of the Houyhnhnms	163
Swift, the Greatest Writer of the Enlightenment	166
Exercises	—
The Development of the English Realistic Novel	167
Henry Fielding	168
His Life and Work	—
"Tom Jones"	169
What Happened to Mr. Jones in His Journey From St. Albans	170
Exercises	173
The Sentimentalists	—
Exercises	174
Robert Burns	175
His Life	—
Robert Burns's Literary Work	179
The Democratic Character of the Poet	—
His Revolutionary Spirit	180
His Love for Scotland	182
"Scots, Wha Hae"	183
His Optimism	184

His Lyrics	185
Exercises	186
Review Questions and Tasks	—
V. The Romantic Movement	189
The Lake Poets	191
"Lines Written in Early Spring"	—
"Wat Tyler"	192
George Gordon Byron	198
His Life and Work	200
"The Corsair"	203
"My Soul Is Dark"	204
"Childe Harold's Pilgrimage"	206
Exercises	212
Percy Bysshe Shelley	213
His Life and Work	214
"Song to the Men of England"	216
"The Mask of Anarchy" (fragment)	217
"To a Skylark" (fragment)	220
"The Cloud" (fragment)	—
Exercises	221
Walter Scott	222
His Life and Work	—
Scott, the Poet	223
Scott, the Novelist	225
Scott's Novels	—
"Ivanhoe"	226
Scott, the First Writer of the Historical Novel	229
Belinsky on Scott	231
Exercises	232
Review Questions	—
Index of Names	234

Татьяна Давыдовна Волосова

Марселла Юльевна Геккер

Владимир Владимирович Рогов

АНГЛИЙСКАЯ ЛИТЕРАТУРА

Учебное пособие для учащихся VIII класса школ
с преподаванием ряда предметов на английском
языке

Редакторы И. Л. Егорова, Л. Р. Тодд

Художник Б. В. Трофимов

Художественный редактор В. Г. Ежков

Технические редакторы Г. Л. Татура, В. В. Новоселова

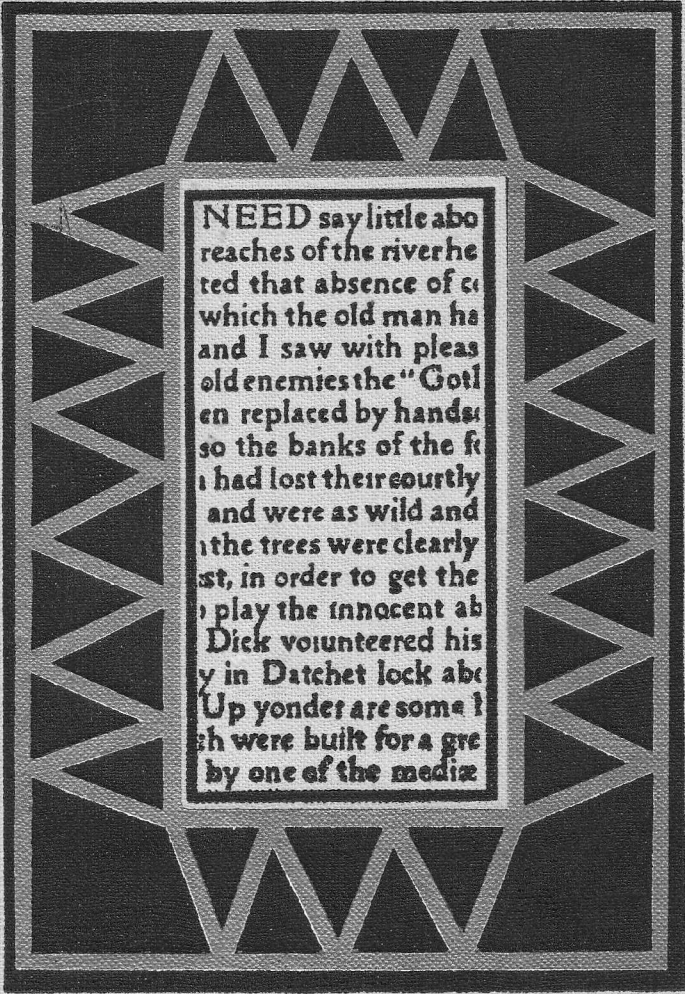
Корректор К. П. Лосева

Сдано в набор 27/IV 1973 г. Подписано к печати 28/IX 1973 г.
60×84¹/₁₆. Бумага тип. № 1. Печ. л. 15,0. Усл. п. л. 13,95. Уч.-изд. л.
13,62. Тираж 72 тыс. экз. Зак. 841.

Издательство «Просвещение» Государственного комитета Совета
Министров РСФСР по делам издательств, полиграфии и книжной
торговли. Москва, 3-й проезд Марьиной рощи, 41.

Ордена Трудового Красного Знамени Ленинградская типография
№ 1 «Печатный Двор» имени А. М. Горького Союзполиграфпрома
при Государственном комитете Совета Министров СССР по делам
издательств, полиграфии и книжной торговли. Ленинград, Гатчин-
ская ул., 26.

Цена 33 коп.



NEED say little abo
 reaches of the river he
 ted that absence of c
 which the old man ha
 and I saw with pleas
 old enemies the "Gott
 en replaced by handa
 so the banks of the fi
 had lost their courtly
 and were as wild and
 the trees were clearly
 st, in order to get the
 play the innocent ab
 Dick volunteered his
 y in Datchet lock ab
 Up yonder are some l
 sh were built for a gre
 by one of the medie